THE DIGNITY OF DISPLACEMENT

Syrian and Palestinian Refugees Negotiating Masculinity and Citizenship in Germany

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the intersection of masculinity and citizenship in the striving for dignity of young male Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Germany from 2016 to 2018. It describes discourses and practices of dignity in the context of everyday lives shaped by compulsory integration policies, instances of inhospitality and the stigma of refugee identity. The study contributes to growing interest in the impact of displacement on the masculine identity of male refugees but seeks to develop this work by situating masculinity in relation to citizenship. The everyday lives of Syrians and Palestinians in Germany were framed by questions such as what needs to be done by when to be able to remain in Germany? What constitutes someone as a "refugee" or citizen? What establishes oneself as worthy of the right to belong? The thesis therefore goes beyond asking what happens to masculinity in displacement to explore how dignity centres on the intersection of masculinity and claims to citizenship as the site of a dialectic that was configured in diverse and sometimes surprising ways. What emerges is not a clear narrative or experience of "accomplishment", nor is it a "crisis of masculinity" of migrant men who suffer from the stigma of displacement and exclusion in the host society. It is more accurate to characterise young male Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Dresden as vacillating between two poles, in which masculine identity was an inventive and plastic identity that offered a site for claims to belong in Germany, but also, in other instances, the perceived or real barrier to such belonging. The thesis therefore describes everyday lives oriented in complex ways and with varying consequences to the interplay of masculine trajectories and citizenship as sources of dignity in the new environment.

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To Mum and Dad

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Introduction

In Milan, Jamil would move around the city openly and he relished explaining to me how he avoided the police by looking like he knew where he was going. He would pretend to talk on his phone and confidently hold a newspaper under his arm. Leaving the metro he would not hesitate about which way to go but keep his head down and follow other people. When he got on the train for Nice in south-west France he made sure to sit close to Italians in order to be as discrete as possible. He sat on the upper floor of the double-decker train because he figured that if border control came on board they would only have limited time to check people before departure and they would start at the bottom of the train. They did in fact come on board, seven or eight of them. In Jamil's re-telling of his journey from Syria to Germany, he performed this moment, showing how he struggled to look calm, settled and at ease while he pretended to read a newspaper. When border control came up to the top-deck they walked straight past him, he said smugly. As the train left for France he glanced outside and saw that they had detained two Syrian men.

In Nice he met a group of Moroccan men who had also just arrived in France and they gave him advice on how to go from Nice to Paris. They were also going to the train station but he didn't follow them because he didn't want to rush and risk getting caught. He stayed alone, moving slowly and deftly, skirting main roads in the centre of the city to avoid the police. When he arrived at the station and got to the train he was in a compartment with two men from Africa who looked at his ticket and told him he wasn't in the right place; he got up and quickly left for the next compartment. At first the door between the compartments wouldn't open, but eventually it did. It turned out that he had been in the right compartment, but when he returned the two men were gone and passengers told him they had been taken by border control. This, he explained, "was the work of God".

Jamil[1] was helping to improve my Syrian Arabic in late 2016. I would go to his apartment in the evening a few times a week high in one of a cluster of 1970s tower blocks in a suburb on the eastern edge of Dresden where Jamil had settled, like a number of refugees from Syria. Jamil is Palestinian from Syria and he and others in the neighbourhood would affectionately describe their cluster of apartments as a Palestinian village, and one old man, a Palestinian-Libyan man, as the *"Mukhtar"*, or village chief. The account above is an extract from a detailed narrative of Jamil's journey to Germany in 2015 that he told me on my first visit to his apartment. It was one of a number of narratives of the journey to Germany from Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and especially Turkey that would be shared with friends that had a similar "script", including instances of crisis, cleverness, bravery and fortune. Another interlocutor, Akram, for example, reached a dramatic crescendo in his account when the engine of the small dinghy he and others were travelling on from Turkey to Greece faltered, and Akram, who was twenty at the time, intervened courageously to fix it. The more I reflected on the relish with which these narratives of agency and sometimes divine intervention were shared, in the context of journeys that entailed considerable hardship, boredom and powerlessness, and the way that such narratives were juxtaposed to the "slots" afforded to the displacement of male refugees as "worthy victims" or "unworthy interlopers", the more they seemed to embody a feature of the everyday lives of my interlocutors in Dresden in 2016 and 2017: the attempt to turn the stigmatising and unsettling condition of becoming refugees into a source of dignity.

In and among the misfortunes, violence and uncertainty of Jamil's journey to Germany, which included being robbed at gun point in Libya and a treacherous journey on a boat from Libya to the southern coast of Italy, he asserted a claim to masculine strength, autonomy and resilience. Dignity in displacement in everyday life in Dresden shares similarities with the attempts of such narratives to fulfil expectations of a valorised masculine identity, involving processes of seeking to turn displacement into a source of "masculine pride and success" (Inhorn & Isidoros 2018). At the same time, narratives of the journey, and the virtues that they often displayed, can be seen to communicate more than claims to masculinity. The narratives can be thought of as articulating a rite of passage where obstacles are overcome which "birth" arrival in Germany and with it the right to claim citizenship. It is this relationship between

[1] All names of individuals in the thesis have been changed to ensure anonymity. I have also changed or not provided other information that could identify someone, such as exact place of origin or age.

masculinity and claims to belong as the terms of asserting dignity that lies at the heart of this thesis.

The Dignity of Displacement contributes to literature that seeks to foreground the masculine identity of migrant men but goes beyond asking what happens to masculinity in displacement. Recent literature has explored the diverse ways that masculine identity serves as a source of stigma in displacement, as well as the means by which men seek to grapple with such stigma and assert dignity. In this thesis, I situate masculinity among male refugees in relation to claiming citizenship in Germany. I draw attention to the complex negotiation, affirmation and tension of these orientations as the site of a dialectic that was configured in new and surprising ways, where notions of what it means to be a man (or to become a man), and what it means to stake a claim to belong in Germany, could take diverse forms. While divergent and new, shifting representations of masculine virtue could be the source of claiming citizenship in Germany, in other contexts, and for differently situated men, masculine identity could face or produce obstacles to such belonging. This thesis therefore zooms-in on the lived experience of a group of young Syrian and Palestinian men as they negotiate top-down integration initiatives that accompanied their recognition as refugees in Dresden, Germany, and explores everyday lives oriented to crafting dignity in displacement by negotiating masculinity and citizenship.

Masculinity and Citizenship

Work on migration has lagged behind gender studies (Charsley & Wray 2015). Lucia McSpadden and Helene Moussa could complain in 1993 of migration scholars' discussion of refugees "as a unitary, non-gendered phenomenon […] as if there were no differences between the experiences of men and women" (1993, 203). The emergence of work on migration and forced displacement and gender tended to focus on women, as the embodiment of the humanitarian category of *"womenandchild"* (Jaji 2009, 177). The effect of this focus is that the male experience is rendered "invisible" (Brun 2000). As Griffiths, who works on the experience of failed male asylum applicants in the UK writes, "there is a tendency for migration scholars either to sideline men or to present them as oppressors, fanatics, or criminals." (2015, 469) In fact, to a great extent this trend reflects broader work in gender studies. In a 2006 review of 157 ethnographies about gender and reproduction, Inhorn found that only one of these studies focussed on men. She writes, "This is a problematic state of affairs because

excluding men from the study of gender suggests that their bodies, attitudes, and actions are both 'natural' and 'essential'." (Inhorn 201, 801)

Masculinity refers to the "cluster of norms, values, and behavioural patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectation of how men should act and represent themselves to others" (Miescher and Lindsay 2003, 4 in Jaji 2008). An important concept in thinking about masculinity has been the notion of "hegemonic masculinity" coined by Connell, to describe "the pattern of practice… that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 832). However, while the concept aimed to describe changing practices, it has become synonymous with static typologies of varying degrees of patriarchal men and does not allow recognition for changing norms and expectations of men over time (Inhorn 2012). Nonetheless, the concept's attention to hierarchies of masculinities and the importance of power in shaping masculine identity has remained important (Ghannam 2013). Inhorn (2011) has developed the term "emergent masculinities" to "capture all that is new and transformative" in men's masculine identity. This encapsulates "individual change over the male life course, change across generations and social change involving men in transformative processes" (803). In putting forward the term, Inhorn aims to problematise depictions of Arab men according to what she terms the "four P's": "patriarchy, patrilineality, patrilocality and polygyny" (Inhorn 2012, 302). In addition to "emergent masculinities", Ghannam has coined the term "masculine trajectories" to articulate changing norms over time: "the process of becoming a man and how during this process, which lasts over a life span, men identify with various ideals, norms, and values." (2013, 7) Masculine trajectories do not develop neatly, rather they are defined by ambiguity and are influenced by unexpected circumstances, representing a "continuous quest for a sense of illusive coherence that has to be cultivated and sustained" (Ibid, 7). This attention to "emergent masculinities" has produced a rich body of work on men in the Middle East, in particular, such as changing attitudes towards birth control (Inhorn 2012), the importance of providing good food to families among working-class men in Cairo (Naguib 2015), revolution stories as new forms of masculine capital (Norbakk 2017), and the adaptation of young Palestinian men in Lebanon to the impossibility of fulfilling the *"fedayeen"* slot (Barbosa 2018).

Growing attention to the experiences of male migrants has explored the connection between migration and masculine identity. Migration has been explored as a "rite of passage" (Monsutti 2005) where boys and young men leave home to work and endure difficult conditions with the expectation of returning in the future as socially-validated men (see also Gaibazzi 2013; Marsden 2005; Osella & Osella 2000). In many cases, migration can entail

undermining or challenging common gender expectations and norms, which can result in men adopting new practices, such as domestic responsibilities, as in the case of Afghan traders in Uzbekistan (Marsden 2015), or among Malaysian men in Australia (Pease 2009). Literature has shown the challenge for men and women of such adjustment and the resulting conflict, such as marriages breaking down after migration (Pasura 2007; Hansen 2008; Boehm 2008; Gallo 2006; Charsley & Wray 2015). Work has also sought to draw attention to men's experiences of vulnerability, including an emerging consensus that suggests women are generally better able to cope with the changes and disruption wrought by migration (Jansen 2008; McSpadden 1993; Korac 2002; Kaplan 1990). In particular, men can confront the loss of status that comes from a changing position in the community and no longer being breadwinner or finding high-status work, such as among middle-class Bosnian men in the Netherlands (Jansen 2008), and Somali men in the UK (Hansen 2008). The distinction between economic migration and forced displacement is in most cases an artificial one but it can play an important role in the extent to which men have time to prepare for and therefore accept a loss of such status (Jansen 2008). Scholars have also shown the kinds of gendered challenges from host countries that can confront men in displacement. This includes the association of male migrants from the Middle East as violent, duplicitous and a danger to women in media discourse and in policy (Johnson 2011, 1026). There is also the assumption that men are tough enough to cope with conditions of displacement without support. The relatively restricted access to material resources and NGO initiatives for Syrian men in Jordan, for example, has led one scholar to ask, "Are Syrian men vulnerable too?" (Turner 2016) In the UK, Griffiths (2015) has shown how men seeking asylum face a difficult balancing act between being too strong, and therefore threatening and violent, and being too weak, and therefore pathetic. In the event of having their application refused they can quickly be given the label of "dangerous bogus asylum seeker".

Furthermore, while there is evidence that the refugee label can have positive associations, including its function as "a lightning rod for a political cause" (Pearlman 2018; Zeno 2017), in many cases it is experienced as a stigmatised identity. Hannah Arendt, who was a refugee from Nazi Germany, wrote in her essay 'We Refugees': "In the first place, we don't like to be called 'refugees.' We ourselves call each other 'newcomers' or 'immigrants.'" (1994, 110) Similarly, a Syrian refugee man in Berlin, quoted by Pearlman, described the stigma of the term "refugee" in the following terms,

> Today, the word "refugee" is used in a horrible way. It's something either to be pitied or blamed for everything. Overpopulation? It's the refugees. Rents going up? It's the refugees. Crime? It's the refugees. If you label people refugees, they remain refugees for the rest of their lives (2017, 272).

The stigma of the refugee label is often lived in gendered terms. Among Syrian men in Egypt, Suerbaum has described how the term "refugee" was a source of emasculation, synonymous with "helplessness, poverty, dependence, and neediness" (2018, 670). The way men's experience of displacement and becoming "refugees" can complicate and upset norms of the masculine role has led to what has been identified as a "crisis of masculinity" (Donaldson & Howson 2009). In the case of Eritrean and Somali refugees in the US, men described fears, such as "to be a beggar", "not to stand on my own feet", and "not to be able to take care of my mother" (McSpadden 1993, 220). Jaji describes how "real men" in the public sphere in Kenya "exhibit wealth through consumption patterns that mark them as successful", as a result refugee men who face barriers to formal employment find refugee status "demeaning and marginalising" (2009, 182). Male refugees who receive assistance and aid from NGOs can suffer what Harrell-Bond described as a "second stress" after the initial violence of displacement, as men's identities, based on the role of provider, are diminished (1999). The result can be a loss of dignity and pride. Hansen describes, for example, rocketing consumption of khat among Somali men in the UK who once had professional jobs and struggle to adjust to the loss of status associated with low-skilled work available in the context of displacement (Hansen 2008). The same has been noted among internally-displaced men in Georgia in what Kabachnik et al. have characterised as "traumatic masculinities", to describe how "the status and roles of IDP men have been severely disrupted, with changes to their social networks and altered economic circumstances where their experiences and training are no longer seen as useful." (2013, 776) Others have shown how this can result in forms of "protest masculinity" through involvement in violence and gangs (Ong 2003; Noble et al 1998; Bourgois 1995).

However, the notion of a "crisis of masculinity" has been problematised by scholars showing how migrant men can be resilient, adjust and find ways of creating a valorised masculine identity in the context of displacement. Kleist shows the role of associations among Somalis in Denmark as sites to construct masculine identity in a context where Somalis face high unemployment and discrimination in mainstream society (2010). This entails processes of producing a "gender baseline", in which "respectable masculinity" is differentiated from "failed masculinity". Suerbaum has charted a similar process among young Syrian male

refugees in Cairo, in which her interlocutors seek to "masculinise" as a way of "unbecoming refugees" through asserting hegemonic masculinity, such as constructing women in highly traditional roles in what Kandiyoti (1993) has termed "patriarchal restoration". For Somalis in Denmark, this can even be constructed through return or "penetration" of the homeland, Somaliland, and the construction of the self as a modern, professional man (Hansen 2008). There has been exploration of the expression of "emergent masculinities" in new contexts, such as the caring roles of Syrian fathers shortly after migrating to Norway in 2015 (Naguib 2018), or the care of other migrants among Afghans in Athens (Palivos 2018). Others have shown the strategic ways that refugees display contrasting masculine identities in order to balance different interests and expectations, including to access employment opportunities, as in the case of Palestinian-Jordanians (Achilli 2015). Inhorn and Isidoros write in a special issue on Arab masculinity that she and others no longer follow the "now hackneyed" tropes of "crisis of masculinity" and "hegemonic masculinity", and introduces how scholars have shown the way that Syrian male refugees "visibly perform their masculine 'responsibility,' attempting to communicate a very different image of what it means to be a refugee man" (2018, 7).

I contribute to this literature by exploring processes by which young Syrian and Palestinian refugees position themselves as mature men in the context of displacement. At the same time, however, I seek to go further than asking "What happens to notions of masculinity in situations of marginalisation and loss?" (Kleist 2010) Rather, I investigate how constructing masculine identity in displacement and seeking to "become men" intersects with inclusion and belonging in Germany, or citizenship. This question is lived in everyday life through being acted upon by top down integration programmes, and with it the possibility and promise of citizenship. The lives of Syrian and Palestinian refugees were framed by questions such as what needs to be done by when in order to be able to remain in Germany? What constitutes someone as a "refugee" or citizen? What establishes oneself as worthy of the right to belong? Exploring processes of positioning oneself as dignified in displacement is not, therefore, to ask what happens to masculine identity, but rather, how does masculinity intersect with citizenship?

Scholars have explored refugees as the embodiment of exclusion in host societies. Work has revealed the ways that outsiderness and uncertainty is produced by states, such as the "deportability" of undocumented migrants in the US (De Genova 2002) and the encampment of asylum seekers in the UK (Darling 2009). Biehl (2015) has described the asylum procedures and management of Syrians in Turkey in what she characterises as "governing through uncertainty", in which the state deliberately constructs policies to create uncertainty for Syrians and therefore avoids granting legal rights. The effect of such policies is to mark asylum seekers

as those "forever at the border" (Darling 2011, 264 in Biehl 2015). Such processes have also been shown in the "documentation regime" for migrants in Italy for example. While learning the details of complex bureaucratic processes offers a space to construct "insiderness", at the same time it can produce a state of marginalisation and uncertainty (Tuckett 2015).

However, there is also recognition of the limited value of seeing displacement through the prism of exclusion alone. Holmes and Castaneda have taken aim at the limitations of applying Agamben's influential conception of "bare life", formulated in relation to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, to explain the circumstances faced by those who are displaced. They write that "refugees are multiple and diverse, differentially involved in making political and symbolic claims", and to this extent,

> are not simply 'bare life' removed from the realm of the political, but rather political actors whose subjectivities are shaped by the uneven social and symbolic environments in which they simultaneously are positioned and position themselves (2016, 20).

Indeed, refugee status, when it is afforded, comes with certain rights, including the right to protection and financial support. Despite the stigma of the term, and attempts to avoid it, it can often be the case that people seek refugee status to gain the protections and rights it should offer. In contrast to what Agamben conceptualises as a state of "permanent exception", the lived experience of many refugees is more complicated. As Ong writes, taking such a perspective "ignores the possibility of complex negotiations of claims of those without territorialised citizenship" (2006, 23). Subsequently, in many settings refugees occupy an ambivalent place between recognition and misrecognition, inclusion and exclusion. This reflects the kinds of ambivalence in Derrida's conception of *"hostipitality"* (2000). Rozakou, for example, shows in her investigation of a refugee camp in Greece, how humanitarian workers construct refugees as "neither fully inside nor totally outside the community but, rather, in the vague space that hospitality draws in between" (2012, 573).

In settings such as Western Europe and Germany, such "hospitality" has tended to entail the expectation of "integration" in the past few decades (Korac 2009). The right to stay and eventually to become citizens has become subject to a "neoliberal logic", in which asylum is less a "right" for the displaced, but rather something to be earnt through fulfilling requirements such as learning the language, completing programmes of integration and becoming financially independent. This can be the case for refugees in Germany, as shown by Heinemann, who

writes of the prevailing attitude in Germany and Austria that "If you want to belong – you have to learn the national language" (2017, 177). In the US, Nawyn (2011) has shown the ways that "social citizenship" has become "eclipsed" by "market citizenship" in which the right to remain is based on being economically productive. Such a conception of citizenship can be shared by migrants who have been shown to disagree with having access to social rights in their first years in a welfare state, such as the Netherlands, in what Kremer has termed "earned citizenship" (2016).

The extent to which migrants and refugees seek the legal status of "citizenship" is an empirical one and there are many reasons why forcibly displaced persons would not invest themselves in this process. This might include the expectation of repatriation or return, as in the case of Arab Iraqi political migrants in the UK (Al-Rasheed 1994). Malkki explored this among Burundian refugees from Tanzania in the late 1980s and 1990s, for whom "refugeeness" attested to a kind of "categorical purity" at the centre of their claims for a future Hutu-dominated state in Burundi (1995). In many settings there are also questions about the importance or value of citizenship status, such as migration in Africa where migrants successfully integrate "despite their restricted access to formal documentation" (Kuch 2016). Indeed, there has been critique of the assumption among NGOs and policy-makers that the solution for displacement is to settle migrants. Hoffman problematises the "highly normative vision" of the "state-citizen relationship" among international NGOs which disrupted the system of migration to Syria for Iraqi migrants when they had previously been free to make livelihoods and integrate, introducing new kinds of biopolitical mechanisms and violence (2016). The extent to which citizenship is sought after by a population of migrants can also change. While Malkki charted the "symbolic purity" of refugee identity among Burundians in Tanzania, for example, recent work has shown the processes by which Burundians have eagerly taken up the offer of citizenship in Tanzania and enthusiastically embraced the right to vote (Kuch 2018).

At the same time, citizenship extends beyond its classic definition of a legal status "with duties and rights" (Marshall 1983 [1950] in Lazar 2013, 1). An important approach has been to explore instances in which refugees and migrants make claims to rights, despite not being citizens. Nyers and Rygiel state, for instance, that we need to ask "how, through various strategies of claims-making, non-citizen migrant groups are involved in practices and ways of engaging in citizenship even when lacking formal status." (2012, 2) This is what Isin has termed "acts of citizenship" and has been explored in the context of demonstrations and sit-ins and is embodied in the figure of the "activist citizen" (Isin & Nyers 2014). What has made this

concept and approach so influential is the way that it enables a site to explore the agency of individuals. Rather than citizenship being a status that one has or is given through fulfilling a set of terms, it is embodied in enacting a political subjectivity. This has been explored in the context of demonstrations for rights, as in the case of the sit-in organised by Afghans in Istanbul (Erensu 2016), demonstrations to claim the right to the freedom to work by Palestinian refugees in Brazil (Moulin 2012), as well as the solidarity between migrants and activists in Calais (Rygiel 2011).

Another way of thinking about citizenship entails a much broader notion of "moral belonging". Citizenship has been defined as the practices that represent belonging to society as "an imagined community of commensurable persons", encompassing the "moral and performative dimensions" of citizenship (Holston & Appadurai 1999; Anderson 2013). Isin writes of this moral dimension of citizenship as "that kind of identity within a city or state that certain agents constitute as virtuous, good, righteous, and superior, and differentiate it from strangers, outsiders and aliens, who they constitute as their alterity…" (2002, 35). He notes elsewhere that this entails "one who has mastered appropriate modes and forms of being an insider" (Isin 2013, 27). What this draws attention to is the relational character of "enacting citizenship". Citizenship as "moral belonging" again distinguishes it from its meaning as a legal status. This is shown, for instance, in what Rosello (1997) has critiqued as the exclusion from "cultural citizenship" suffered by Latin American citizens of the US who confront discrimination.

In this thesis, citizenship is both a status to achieve (i.e. the right to remain), and the everyday lives of refugees are closely bound-up with the integration initiatives that are supposed to enable this, as well as representing broader notions of moral belonging. This can be understood in relation to the stigma associated with refugeeness, where the process of negotiating, articulating and performing the capacity and "worthiness" to belong in the political community is, at the same time, a process of grappling with one's stigmatised identity as a refugee, or outsider. What I explore in this thesis is the way that dignity for refugees in Germany entails negotiating citizenship in relation to processes of constructing a masculine identity. Negotiating belonging and becoming a man are not separate pursuits but are closely intertwined. Grappling with a maligned status as both powerless and needy yet threatening *male* outsiders necessitates processes of performing and negotiating masculine identity and the place of such masculinity within the fabric of Germany. To this extent, the thesis takes up the work of scholars exploring the intersection of citizenship and masculinity.

Tensions between masculine identity and citizenship have been detailed in work such as Katherine Ewing's *Stolen Honor*, where she explores representation of Turkish-German Muslim men and "how the theme of masculinity is […] deployed to stigmatize a minority as part of the process of forming a national subject" – a post-war, democratic subject with an "egalitarian orientation grounded in constitutional patriotism" (2008, 14). The result is the creation of an "abject Other" that is denied cultural citizenship in Germany. There is evidence to suggest stigmatised ethnic minority and migrant men adjust to expectations of masculine identity in new environments. Ewing shows this in the case of Turkish-German men who employ strategies such as displacing stigma on to others, compartmentalising their identity, and identifying with the modern (Ibid, 121). Similar processes have been shown in the case of Syrian refugees in Belgium who employ "comparative strategies of self" to displace stigma on to other refugees and migrants, such as the figure of the economic migrant (Vandevoordt & Verschragen 2019). In the case of Bosnian men in the Netherlands, Jansen shows how some younger men develop their identity as "serious", matching expectations of the Dutch host society and therefore allowing them to negotiate belonging (2008). This fits with a broader thesis that postulates the ways that migrant men adjust masculine identities to "fit in" with the dominant and valorised masculinity of the host society (Howson 2013). In an insightful article, Ingvars and Gislason show how Syrians who arranged a sit-in protest in Athens in 2014 to protest being prevented from onward migration "engaged democratic practices" to perform their moral responsibility and therefore forged a "new refugee masculinity" (2018, 387) that showed their capacity to belong.

This study builds on existing literature to explore the intersection of masculinity and citizenship in the everyday lives of young Syrian and Palestinian men in their first years as refugees in Germany. What emerges from these reflections is a disparate picture, and one that adds nuance and complexity to accounts which have tended at times to produce images of masculine self-realisation and "accomplishment" and inclusion, on the one hand, and a "crisis" of masculinity and exclusion on the other. It shares with work that draws attention to the aspirations of migrants, and their often uncertain consequences. Through thick description and attention to the everyday lives of young Syrian and Palestinian men, I situate how the dignity of "becoming men" and negotiating citizenship exist in a complex relationship. Being "good at being a man" (Herzfeld 1987) could at times be the site of one's dignity and deservingness as a member of society, where what constitutes masculine self-realisation is an inventive, plastic and adaptable identity. Not only fulfilling the expectations of a watching German state and society, their migration could represent a gift to give; Germans, in the view of my

interlocutors, do (or should) in some instances "integrate" with Arabs. Yet fulfilling masculine expectations and negotiating inclusion could be the site of tensions and contradictions where what it means to be a man – in most cases a young Arab, Muslim man – confronts expectations of citizenship. What I capture is not a clear narrative or experience of "accomplishment", nor is it the "crisis" of migrant men who suffer from the stigma of displacement. Rather, the thesis offers an account of everyday lives oriented in complex ways and with varying consequences to the interplay of masculine trajectories and citizenship as sources of dignity in the new environment.

From Uprisings in Syria to the "Refugee Crisis"

The migration of Syrians to Germany from Syria, as well as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere has its roots in the 2011 uprising. This took place in the turbulence of the Arab Spring that followed the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, triggered on the 17 December 2010 by Omar Bouazizi's self-immolation in protest at corruption and poor living standards. Observers doubted whether the protests would reach Syria, where the regime of Bashar Assad was relatively more repressive, civil society had been effectively curtailed for decades, and Syria itself was a highly diverse country (Pearlman 2017, 5). However, protests did begin in March 2011 in Dara'a after the detention and torture of teenage boys for writing anti-government graffiti. When a delegation of respected elders went to the governor of Dara'a to ask for the release of the boys, he told them to return to the boys' mothers and "make more children" (Chatty 2017, 221), a shocking disrespect that played a part in turning what had been peaceful demonstrations for the boys' release into violent protests. Dara'a was followed immediately by Homs and Hama on the 18 March 2011, where demonstrators demanded broader political reform. There was considerable hope at this stage of the protests where, as in other Arab states, the protests reflected frustration with corruption and demands for democratisation and political freedom. Rima, a writer from Suwayda in Pearlman's evocative collection of interviews with displaced Syrians, *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled,* describes how she joined the protests and began shouting "Freedom!"

> "This is the first time I have ever heard my own voice." I thought, "This is the first time I have a soul and I am not afraid of death or being arrested or anything else." I wanted to feel this freedom forever. And I told myself that I would never again let anyone steal my voice (2017a, 80).

In response to protests, minor reforms were introduced by the regime, such as opening dialogue with some reform-oriented figures and holding parliamentary elections. This was combined, however, with a violent crackdown from the Syrian National Army with the assistance of the *Shabiha,* Alewite militia who supported Assad, resulting in large-scale arrests and torture of protestors, including a massacre of a peaceful vigil held at Clock Square in Homs on the 19 April 2012. In the following month, demonstrations in Homs were suppressed, leading to the deaths of 8000 people. Despite the violence, there was not yet large-scale migration out of Syria. In the first twelve months of the revolution, only 50,000 Syrians had crossed borders to neighbouring countries (Chatty 2017).

The revolution, which was initially led by working-class urban and rural youth, turned into divisions based broadly on sectarian differences, primarily through the regime's own doing, including the release of war-hardened al-Qaida militants in December 2011 in order to substantiate its claim that demonstrators were "terrorists". The regime's crackdown resulted in the formation of a militarised group formed mainly of army defectors, the Free Syrian Army. It was set-up initially to protect demonstrators, but it quickly began to fight the army and make military gains. Subsequently, what began as demands for reform became a military conflict with the emergence of diverse opposition groups, including Islamist-oriented rebel forces, such as Al-Nusra Front. As it developed into a military conflict, Syria soon became the site of a highly complex and protracted proxy war, in which Iran, Hezbollah and later Russia supported the Assad regime, and a range of outside actors supported diverse rebel forces, including groups funded by rival Gulf states, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and the US. In eastern Syria, chaos and a power vacuum led to take-over by Islamic State from neighbouring Iraq, which established its capital in the city of Raqqa in January 2014. The consequences of the war raged on several fronts since 2011 has been the loss of approximately 400,000 lives as of the beginning of 2017 according to a World Bank report (2017) and the destruction of large swathes of the country. At the time of writing, the Assad regime with the support of Russian airpower has re-taken most of Syria, with remaining areas under rebel control in Idlib coming under sustained aerial bombardment by Russia, leading to renewed fears of a humanitarian emergency for the 3 million civilians in the region, many displaced from other parts of Syria.

The consequence of the destruction has been that a country with a long history as a state providing refuge from various conflicts in the region over past decades, including Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, has suffered large-scale displacement of its population. UNHCR estimates that in 2019 there are 6.6 million internally-displaced people in Syria and as many as 5.6 million

people who have left the country.[2] Major countries of migration are Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as 1 million refugees who fled to Europe, a significant proportion of whom came to Germany between 2014 and 2016.

Migration to Germany and its Consequences

In 2013, there was the initial migration of people from Syria along the Mediterranean route to Europe. The numbers reached 626,000 in 2014, and then rose steeply in 2015 with the opening of the "Balkan route", including the emergence of a "free market" of smuggler organisations and networks to take boats from the east coast of Turkey to Greece (Da Silva 2017). While the boat journey had considerable risks, and UNHCR reported that 4000 people drowned making the crossing in 2015, it was considered safer than previous routes, such as the crossing from Libya to Italy. From Greece, the majority of people travelled by train, bus and on foot to Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Germany, and some travelled onwards to Sweden, which received 163,000 migrants. According to the UN, 921,713 migrants travelled along the Balkan route in 2015 and 149,100 travelled from Libya to the south coast of Italy. Of this figure, 51% of people came from Syria, 20% from Afghanistan and 7% from Iraq (*BBC News* 22 December 2015). After the decision to waive the Dublin Protocol on the 24 August 2015, and with it the "March of Hope" of thousands of people previously stuck at Keleti train station in Budapest, the numbers of migrants arriving in Germany rose rapidly. By October 2015, 700,000 Syrians had migrated to Germany (Achilli 2016) and there was the emergence of a discourse of crisis when it was reported that as many as 600 new applicants were being processed every day (Selim et al. 2018, 34). It has been estimated that around 1 million Syrians arrived in Germany by the end of 2018.

The term *"Willkommenskultur"* (culture of welcome) originated in the importance of recruiting appropriate specialists in order to be able to manage the needs of new arrivals (Hamann & Karakayali 2016). In 2015, it quickly came to refer to massive public engagement and mobilisation in response to the breakdown of the state. As Bock (2018) notes, in just a few months in 2018 there emerged in Germany a discourse of a "refugee crisis" (*Flütchlingskrise*). The failure to be able to effectively handle and administer the large numbers of people who came was reflected in February 2016 when the state admitted that 130,000 asylum seekers had "disappeared" from shelters across Germany (Ibid, 386). The result of the breakdown of public

[2] https://www.unhcr.org/uk/syria-emergency.html

administration was the space for new forms of civic engagement leading to a huge mobilisation to assist the newcomers. A powerful image from the time was crowds waiting at the central train station in Munich to welcome people arriving on trains from Budapest with children's toys and flowers. In the midst of this, an image of a boy lying face down in the water went viral. The drowning of Alan Kurdi (initially reported as "Aylan") on the journey to Greece from Turkey on the 2 September 2015, shortly after the decision to suspend the Dublin Protocol, has been identified by Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi as a key moment in the promotion of a culture of "xenophilia" (2016). They describe the effect as follows,

> The photo inevitably brought our eyes to its punctum—the small baby shoes staring back at us and his arm lifeless at his side. Its immediate effect was to puncture indifference, collapsing all geographic and temporal distance to suffering, eliminating any innocent position.

A survey by the Social Sciences Institute of the Evangelical Church in late 2015 showed that 10.9% of the German population were volunteering to provide assistance to refugees in Germany, about 8 million people. Of these volunteers, 40% of people were involved in offering German language lessons (Hamann & Kayakali 2016). There emerged a network of spontaneously organised collections for clothing and other supplies throughout Germany coordinated on social media (Bochow 2015), as well as fundraising events, such as the "refugee welcome parties" organised in towns and cities, and even a refugee solidarity event at SchwuZ in August 2015, a gay club in Berlin (Holmes & Castaneda 2016). "The prevailing mood in Germany", *Der Spiegel* reported, "was not one of populist outrage but of enthusiasm." (Borneman & Ghassem-Fachandi 2016). There was a feeling that people coming to Germany were "deserving" and it has been noted by scholars that it was an unusually long period of grace for the plight of migrants in the German press without recourse to "hysteria and scandals" (Vollmer & Kayakali 2018, 120). This was to the extent that the traditionally centre-right *Der Bild* newspaper even published a supplement in Arabic welcoming refugees to Berlin.

However, this mood of xenophilia was not true everywhere. Even at the high point of *Willkommenskultur* there were foreboding signs for those who looked hard enough. In a piece for *Anthropology Today* in December 2015, Chris Hann warned,

> It became clear almost at once that the euphoria of *Willkommenskultur* (culture of hospitality) would be short-lived. Celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of

> German unification [3 October, 2015] were subverted by the burning issue of the moment. Almost every talk show in Germany this autumn has juxtaposed sober analysis from supporters of the chancellor with more or less passionate criticism from those claiming to speak on behalf of concerned citizens *(besorgte Bürger)*.

During this period there was considerable vandalism and destruction of asylum shelters. According to figures from the Federal Bureau of Crime, attacks on such shelters increased from 199 in 2014 to 1005 in 2015 (*BBC News* 2016). Pegida, the populist far right social movement was formed in October 2014 in Dresden in response to the establishment of 11 asylum shelters in the city. Tensions escalated at a camp in Heidenau, close to Dresden, in August 2015, when local people gathered for three days of protests, including chanting and throwing rocks and setting-off fireworks. As the *Augsburger Allegemeine* newspaper warned in September 2015, "One million refugees? The atmosphere is threatened to change" (Vollmer & Kayakali 2018). On all accounts such a change happened at the end of 2015 with the events of New Year's Eve and the sexual assault of as many as a thousand women in Cologne by predominantly North African asylum seekers, resulting in what has been described as a "moral panic" (Kosnick 2019). As Borneman and Ghassem-Fachandi write of the event, "The divisive and threatening spectre of sexual assault contributed to a return to ambivalence, mobilizing Germans for a *Stimmungswechsel* [mood swing] from a dominant xenophilia to xenophobia." (2016, 116) This event particularly highlighted existing anxieties of the relatively high numbers of young men arriving to Europe (Selim et al. 2018). However, such a "mood change" did not lead to a decline in the number of people volunteering in Germany, even six months after New Year's Eve. Furthermore, a DeutschlandTrend survey in February 2016 showed that 94% of respondents supported Germany continuing to receive refugees (Bock 2018). Nevertheless, there did seem to emerge a change in the enthusiasm associated with migration to Germany, and as the figures also show, a majority now supported an upper limit to the intake of migrants.

Even before the assaults of New Year's Eve, there had been moves to drastically reduce migration. In November 2015, Germany ended exemption to the Dublin Protocol and like other European states erected controls on its borders, representing a threat to the Schengen free-travel zone. At the same time, Hungary, Macedonia and Serbia moved to close the Balkan route, resulting in huge numbers of people stuck in Greece. Eventually, on the 18 March 2016, a deal was made with Turkey for people arriving "illegally" on Greek islands to be sent back and for a host of measures in Turkey to prevent migration. In return, EU states would take the equivalent number of asylum seekers arriving in Greece from camps in eastern Turkey and

would pay Turkey 6 billion euros. Furthermore, in March 2016 Germany instituted policies that prevented family reunification for people granted subsidiary protection, a policy that was eventually lifted on the 1 August 2018. The deal with Turkey and suspension of family reunification was part of a range of policies to reduce migration, including the strengthening of border control in what is branded as "Fortress Europe". There was a rapid increase in funding for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), from 143 million euros in 2015 to 238 million euros in 2016 and then 302 million in 2017. In 2017, this resulted in the number of asylum claimants being reduced to 650,000. In 2018, further restrictions followed a deal between Italy and Libya to prevent migration.

Despite these measures, there continued to be massive political implications of the decision to accept high numbers of refugees in Germany as it became the stage for an insurgent far right (Rehberg, Kunz, and Schlinzig 2016). In the federal elections in September 2017 in what was framed as a vote on Merkel's decision to accept refugees in 2015-16, the CDU received its worst result for two decades and *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) became the first far right party to enter the Bundestag since World War Two. After another disappointing set of results at local elections in 2018, Merkel was forced to announce that she would not stand again as chancellor in 2021. There were a number of reason for her resignation but analysts cite backlash to her refugee policy as among the most important (Le Blond 2018).

Integrating Refugees

How has Germany managed the incorporation of its new refugee population? Initially, new arrivals were housed in temporary "camps", including school gym halls, empty warehouses, even a disused airport, Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. In Dresden, there were several buildings turned into asylum shelters, including an unused former school near Albert Wolf Platz in Prohlis which was then re-purposed for use as a centre for the integration programme. As asylum applications were processed, refugees left the camps for accommodation provided by *Socialamt* (Social Security Office), often crowded apartments hosting two people to a bedroom with a shared kitchen and bathroom. Many Syrians and Palestinians from Syria, at least initially, were provided with three years refugee status which allowed the right to family reunification as well as to access social security. Others, especially those who arrived later, often received a one-year visa which they had to renew annually and did not allow for family reunification and other rights. However, after three years of receiving such visas they were

granted the same rights as other refugees, including the possibility to apply to bring family members to Germany.

The Jobcenter, which features a great deal in the chapters that follow, was responsible for administering social security and overseeing the integration programme in Germany. Every refugee had a supervisor at the Jobcenter, and the relationship to this person was perceived by my interlocutors as essential for accessing opportunities for further language and training opportunities after the compulsory programme. The Jobcenter provided a single individual with a maximum budget of 410 euros a month for housing, which was enough to rent a studio apartment in Dresden. While finding an apartment from the social housing giant Vonovia was often not too challenging, it was trickier to find somewhere in more affluent areas or with other housing providers. Not everyone was able to make a quick transition from the camp to social housing to living independently, however. One man I knew from Homs was still living in the camp two years after he first arrived because of a problem with his paperwork, and those who did not receive refugee status, such as Palestinians from Lebanon, or Afghans, remained in social housing. In addition to providing rent for an apartment, the Jobcenter provided 700 euros to furnish the apartment and administer a monthly stipend of 400 euros to live on. It was also responsible for administering the integration programme (*Integrationskurs*), which became compulsory in the Integration Act passed in August 2016 as part of a host of packages that sought to grapple with the challenges posed by the arrival of high numbers of migrants.

The integration course consists primarily of completing language classes that begin for most people with A1 of the Common European Framework, or beginner level, to B1, or intermediate level, the minimum level required to apply for the right to remain in Germany. Each course takes approximately two months and consists of 200 hours teaching. A1 and A2 courses have internal exams that need to be passed to move on to B1, while the B1 course has an externally moderated exam and certificate. This is followed by a three-week orienteering course which introduces the politics, history and society of Germany and has a multiple choice exam consisting of a selection of 33 questions from a possible 333 questions. Depending on what an individual wants to do, they may then be entitled to complete the longer B2 course which is a requirement for doing an *Ausbildung* (vocational training), the aim of many of my friends, as well as a *Weiterbildung* (further education). Others, however, looked for work after B1, typically in restaurants, local hotels, or Arab-owned shops. In the event of not finding work it was common to have to do the six-month *Maßnahme,* a programme which provides help with German and assistance in skills, such as preparing a curriculum vitae. For those entering an *Ausbildung*, they were no longer the responsibility of the Jobcenter and they would receive a

grant from the *Agentur für Arbeit* (Employment Agency). Another option was to attend school in order to complete the *Abitur,* the equivalent to A-levels, and the main route for going to university.

The Fieldwork Setting

On the 27 September 2016, the day before I arrived, Dresden was in the news. Two improvised devices had exploded, one at the entrance of the Fatih Mosque in the district of Cotta, and the second on the terrace of the Congress Centre overlooking the River Elbe. Eventually in August 2018 Nino Köhler, an active member of Pegida, would be charged and sentenced to ten years in prison. The week after I arrived, Dresden hosted the twenty-sixth celebration of re-unification on the 3 October. There were stalls set-up during the long weekend which included speeches by Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. In the event, Dresden hit newspaper headlines again when a huge far right rally, led by Pegida, booed and heckled Merkel during her speech, including chants of *"Merkel muss weg"* (Merkel must go) and *"Wir sind das Volk"* (We are the people). This reflects a pattern in which national and international media coverage of Dresden has tended since 2014 to be associated with the insurgent far right, as the city is the birthplace of the Pegida movement which, at its height, was attracting as many as 25,000 people from across Saxony and elsewhere to their *Spaziergang* (walk) through the centre of Dresden.

Refugees were distributed to villages, towns and cities across Germany, and relatively few found themselves in Dresden, a city of 550,000 people on the eastern border of Germany, close to the Czech Republic (see Figure 1). In 2016, there were 8130 refugees in Dresden compared to 82,105 in Berlin, for example.[3] Despite its relatively small number, the political implications of migration to Dresden have been enormous. Yet if this is what drew me to Dresden, I was keen to situate the experience of my interlocutors beyond headlines of the far right. I was fascinated in the first weeks and months of my fieldwork to learn that many local people in Dresden were baffled by the transformation of their city into the flag bearer of the far right and some could hardly believe the city's association internationally. This is not to say that it was an entirely new phenomenon, and I was to learn much later that the small mosque in Johannstadt in Dresden where my friends occasionally went to Friday prayer was named the Marwa El-Sherbini Mosque after an Egyptian engineering student who was murdered in court

[3] https://service.destatis.de/DE/karten/migration_integration_regionen.html#ANT_SCH_I

in Dresden in 2009 by Alex Wiens, who had just been charged with verbally abusing her. Nonetheless, Dresden's association with the far right was for many locals a shocking transformation of the city's image.

Dresden's history and its reconstructed Old Town owes a great deal to its illustrious past as the seat of the Saxon monarchy. The extent of the wealth and power of the Saxon Electors and from 1808, Saxon Kings, is reflected in the Royal Palace at the centre of Dresden – the former royal residence and now museum. The city's status as the capital of the wealthy Kingdom of Saxony had always made it a centre for arts and learning. It was in Dresden in 1818, for example, that the philosopher Schopenhauer penned his most important work, *The World as Will and Representation*. This association continues to this day, perhaps most notably in classical music and opera, housed in the famous Semper Oper. Dresden's status as a centre of arts, culture and learning threatened to come to a violent end during World War Two on the 3 February 1944 when British and US planes carpet bombed the city in "Operation Thunderclap", destroying in one night an area of 1600 square miles and killing as many as 25,000 people in what continues to be one of the most controversial offences of the Allies in Germany in the war.

Figure 1 - Dresden in Europe (© OpenStreetMap: www.openstreetmap.org/copyright)

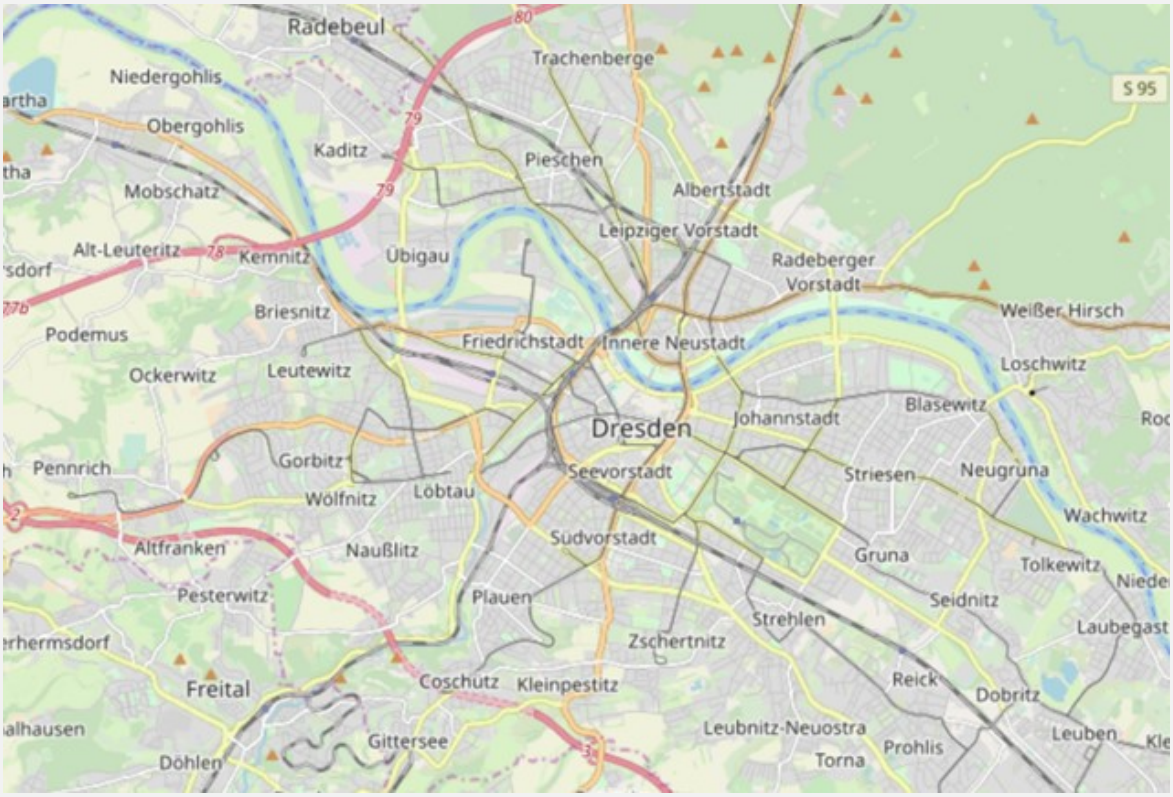

Figure 2 - Dresden and surrounding areas (© OpenStreetMap: www.openstreetmap.org/copyright)

In the aftermath of the war, the shell of Dresden was included in the new German Democratic Republic (GDR) which between 1945 and 1989 led to profound changes to the region's society, politics and economy. One of the many consequences of this history is that Dresden and Saxony, like the rest of GDR, did not see the arrival of large numbers of guest workers from Italy and later Turkey after the war as in West Germany. Main sources of migration to the GDR were from Vietnam and Mozambique, which had established worker agreements and traineeships (Hillmann 2005). The transformation of the state-planned economy and communist society after reunification in 1989 led to profound changes in Dresden, which according to some analysts can be felt today in the prominence of the far right (Chazan 2017). The emergence of the far right in Dresden and the wider GDR is seen in part as an expression of the resentment and indignity associated with reunification and disappointment at high unemployment and relatively poor infrastructure and wages compared to other parts of Germany.[4] That said, Dresden today is an increasingly wealthy city, it has a dynamic economy centred around the pharmaceutical industry and electrical and mechanical engineering.

Doing Fieldwork

It took some time to be able to meet and get to know Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden. Tellingly perhaps, the first person I met, Ali from Iraq, was when we both stood watching an enormous Pegida demonstration on the 7 October 2016 close to the main station, *Hauptbahnhof*. Ali introduced me to Jamil, who would help me to improve my Syrian Arabic, and introduced me to others. However, it was not until I began the A1 class of the *Integrationskurs* in November 2016 that I really began to meet and get to know the individuals who would become my "key informants". The 200 hours of each course was a conducive space for slowly getting to know and trust one another and explain my interest in learning about the everyday lives of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Germany. The classes, which normally took place from 8am to 1pm, were punctuated with two 15-minute breaks where we would buy sweets, drink coffee and smoke cigarettes. There would also be opportunities to catch-up and make plans on the tram to the school and afterwards on the way home. Slowly, as I got to know people better, I would join them in the different settings and activities of their daily lives.

[4] The European Commission notes that Saxony in 2017 had an above average unemployment rate of 4.4%, with some regions as high as 10%. See: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/base-profile/saxony.

In conducting participant observation, I joined friends in the activities that made up their everyday lives as newly-arrived refugees in Germany. I attended meetings at the Jobcenter, went shopping at the newly-opened Arab shops, attended visits to the hospital, and hung out in cafes. A considerable portion of my fieldwork was spent visiting people's apartments. Without the money, as well as the knowledge, familiarity or sense of security to spend too much time going out, the home was often the most common space to see friends. My interlocutors tended to live alone in studio apartments or shared an apartment with one or two friends. They lived in various parts of the city, and I often spent considerable portions of each day travelling between these areas by tram. When we went to the city centre, the majority of time was spent in the modern development around Prager Strasse, a long straight pedestrianised high street from the main station to Prager Strasse tram stop. This area has two shopping centres that we would regularly visit, Altmarkt Gallerie, a mall with food outlets and expensive shops, and Centrum Gallerie, where there are more affordable shops. Prager Strasse was flanked on one side by a short pedestrianised street, Ferdinandstrasse, which is dubbed, at least by Germans if not Arabs, as "Arab Street". Here there were a few Arab supermarkets, including Seta Markt, the largest supermarket for Arabic food, complete with a mobile phone repair service, oven (*frn*) and perfumery (see Figure 3). This street was the site of coming and going, a place to stop on the way back from language classes, on trips from the Jobcenter, or for simply hanging out in town. Close to Ferdinandstrasse was Starbucks, the main café where my friends would sit, in the corner of Centrum Gallerie.

I got to know around ten young Syrian and Palestinian men who I would see regularly and whose lives and experiences are the focus of this thesis. In addition, there were other people I would see occasionally, including two middle-aged couples with children. Although most of my interlocutors are young men between the ages of 18 and 35, or *shabāb*, and the majority are single, they nevertheless constitute a very diverse group. They hailed from a range of regional, ethnic, national, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Alongside Syrians, I got to know Palestinians from Syria, predominantly from Yarmouk Camp in Damascus, almost all third-generation descendants of Palestinians displaced from present-day Israel in the 1948 *Nakba*. Palestinians in Syria do not have Syrian citizenship and although they share many of the same rights, they nonetheless confront discrimination and certain restrictions, such as the right to own property. The distinction between Palestinians and Syrians could be important in Germany and I investigate this explicitly in the discussion of political activism in Chapter 6. In view of this difference, and the fact that the vast majority of Palestinians I met would self-identify as Palestinian, I refer to "Syrians and Palestinians" throughout the thesis. The scale of

displacement from Syria reflects the diversity of my interlocutors who came from across Syria, including Dara'a, Homs, Damascus, Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir ezZour, and many other places. In addition, I came to know people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and this profoundly shaped the experience of integration in Germany despite the class-levelling effects of displacement (McSpadden & Moussa 1993). The majority of my friends, however, came from lower middle class and working class backgrounds and aimed to enter work in professions such as electricians, cooks, hairdressers and computer repair. A few of the people I got to know left Syria after completing a degree at university and hoped to use their knowledge and qualifications in fields such as medicine, accounting and website design.

Figure 3 – A Palestinian food store on Ferdinandstrasse (Photo by author, 2017)

There are few voices of Syrian and Palestinian women in the study. While scholars have shown the importance of situating the "construction" of men in their relationships to women, such as the importance of female siblings (Joseph 1993; Ghannam 2013; Inhorn 2012), for Syrians and Palestinians in Germany, women tended to be present in their absence, such as the aspiration to marry in the future. Almost all my interlocutors were single and came without female members of their families, therefore contact with female kin or a girlfriend was restricted for

many of my friends to private messages and calls. Talking to girlfriends especially could play a very important role in the everyday lives of my friends, who could spend hours every day communicating on online messaging services such as WhatsApp, but this was not a sphere that I came to learn much about. In general, I met relatively few women in Dresden, reflecting the fact that according to the Pew Research Centre, 73% of migrants to Europe in 2015 (across all nationalities, but this trend was reflected among Syrian migrants) were men.[5] I also confronted a similar challenge to what has been described by other male anthropologists who struggle to meet and spend time with women (see Kelly 2008), although this is certainly not always the case (Marsden 2005). For the Syrian and Palestinian women I did meet, our exchanges were nearly always limited to public settings, such as language classes. Within these classes too, however, there tended to be an informal division of space. For example, during break times women would often stay in the school and men would go outside to smoke. To this extent, most women I met tended to be wives of the few friends who were married, and the extent to which we talked varied from couple to couple. For these reasons, this account of young men is largely centred on the voices and experiences of the men themselves. However, I agree with Najmabadi who has written that "if we use gender analytically, sources about men are also sources about women." (2005, 1)

I began fieldwork wanting to investigate the politics of integration in the framework of hospitality offered by Germans in individual and community initiatives "after" *Willkommenskultur*. Considering this initial aim, it is worth mentioning why I do not discuss in detail community initiatives to support refugees in Dresden. Despite being renowned for the far right, there were a number of initiatives in the city. There was, for instance, a theatre group called *Montagscafé* in Neustadt on Monday evenings; an *ABC-Tische* (ABC-tables) event hosted at a local museum where Germans were available for conversation practice; and there was a social evening hosted at the Pentecostal church in Striesen fortnightly. Most interesting was the *Willkommen im Hochland* initiative in the village of Pappritz, north-east of Dresden, which organised a whole set of activities to assist in bringing together local people and asylum seekers accommodated in a hotel in the village, in response to strong hostility among residents when conversion of the hotel began in 2014. Attending German classes was intended to prepare me for being able to participate in such initiatives, but as I spent more time with the people I met in language classes, I found few of my interlocutors got involved. One of the reasons for this is because many of the activities and programmes organised by organisations tended to be

[5] https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/4-asylum-seeker-demography-young-and-male/

aimed at asylum seekers who did not receive funding from the state to learn German or support to look for work. To this extent, such initiatives were not an important part of the everyday lives of my interlocutors. Attending was also complicated by what remained my basic level of German, which limited the extent to which I was able to communicate with German participants and follow activities taking place.

An *Ausländer* among *Ausländer*

Anthropology is often defined by its method of participant observation, which is best summarised by DeWalt and DeWalt as learning about the "daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and culture" (2002, 1). It entails "deep hanging out" (Geertz 1998) over a normally long period which, as Fetterman writes, "helps the researcher internalise the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectations of the people under study." (1989, 45) In spending considerable time with young Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden, I aimed to inhabit and experience first-hand, as far as possible, the spaces where people spent time, the perceptions, aspirations and frustrations of differently situated people, and the lived experience of particular kinds of state interventions and the uncertainty of encounters with Germans. One advantage of participant observation over other social scientific methods is the way that it situates discourses in real, everyday life contexts, allowing scholars to compare what people say with what people do. It is in ethnography's capacity to record chance conversations, spontaneous reactions and unpredictable events that provides a powerful analytical approach and what affords the analysis in the chapters that follow.

During fieldwork, I tended to make notes on my phone from conversations taking place and observations of events and situations in order to remember the details, and afterwards I would write these up into fieldnotes. In some cases, this included full quotes when there was time and space to record these. As phones were such a present part of all our lives and we would constantly keep up to date through messages and voice recordings on WhatsApp, I would also discuss topics and points of interest in longer discussions over the phone and in voicemails during and after my fieldwork. In addition, I conducted more formal, unstructured interviews with a number of my interlocutors about specific, key themes that emerged during fieldwork. I also conducted interviews in German with the help of an interpreter with representatives from key institutions, including the Jobcenter, the *Auslanderrat* (Foreigners Office), organisers of a *Maßnahme* programme, as well as teachers on integration courses.

O'Reilly makes the point that participation and observation in participant observation is a "contradiction" (2005), which she later revised to a "dialectic" (2012). Both these terms point to the tension between participation (as an insider) and observation (as an outsider). This tension is something that all ethnographers face to varying degrees (Spadola 2011; Inge 2013), and I similarly faced the challenge of combining the intimacy and trust that made fieldwork enjoyable and rewarding with my status as a researcher. I often felt at risk of becoming *maṣlaḥjī*, meaning someone who takes advantage of someone else, and it was a term that my interlocutors would sometimes employ, jokingly, to describe the nature of our new and somewhat peculiar friendship, and the way that I had suddenly appeared from the UK and would at a point in the future return there. I therefore agree with what Coffey has noted as the way that ethnographers need to have discipline in order "to maintain fruitful fieldwork relations" (1999, 41), ensuring that the ethnographer takes steps to create the distance necessary to be able to conduct research. One way I achieved this was to invite my interlocutors to analyse observations, patterns and themes that emerged during my fieldwork, reflecting what Schielke (2015) has described as the way that conducting ethnography is an "open-ended conversation".

It is important to be aware of the impact of the researcher's presence on research and how this influences findings (Davies 2008). Typically, anthropologists are newcomers to a community and slowly seek to negotiate inclusion into that community. In my case, I was a newcomer to Germany seeking to join a community of newcomers. I was, as my interlocutors would often tell me, as much an *"Ausländer"* (foreigner) in Dresden as they were. Indeed, I often responded with the same sense of surprise and uncertainty as my friends to aspects of life in Dresden, or a feature of German language (see also Mandel 2013). Furthermore, speaking Arabic in public put me in a similar position of outsiderness and there was a joke that I was trying to "integrate" with Arabs while everyone else was trying to "integrate" with Germans. To this extent I developed a degree of insiderness with my interlocutors based on certain common experiences of outsiderness in Dresden in a way that would have been difficult as a German researcher. One of the advantages of this was that I could be a soundboard for fascinating reflections on German society, and many of these feature in the chapters that follow.

At the same time, however, I could occupy an ambivalent position, and despite being a fellow *"Ausländer"* I was also seen as "European", as fitting in more easily, as moving around free of the stigma and discrimination they confronted, and as having a certain intuitive understanding of the society around us. To this extent, my status as a European *insider* certainly shaped many of my encounters, and there was no doubt that certain topics, perspectives and experiences were shared, or not shared, on the basis of this. In a discussion with one

interlocutor, Omar, for example, he said he did not want to talk to me about his relationship to his father because I was European and therefore I "wouldn't understand". I could also be the target of discourses of cultural superiority, as in the frequent comparison of the richness of Arabic and what my friends perceived as the relative poverty of German, English and other European languages. I shared some of the experiences of Vandevoordt (2017), who described his impression of how his conversations with Syrians in Belgium were framed by the fact that he was a Belgian citizen. However, my experience was varied; I was both the object of discourses that sought to assert dignity and deservingness in front of a "European", but also developed the intimacy to see how such discourses could break down. To this extent, a great deal of the richness of the account that follow comes from the sharing of doubts, disappointments and self-deprecation among my interlocutors.

Outline of Chapters

The thesis begins by exploring the lived experience of labour market integration policies in Germany. Such policies were an important part of discourses among my interlocutors that sought to turn forced displacement into a form of migration that embodies masculine agency and a claim to "neoliberal citizenship". In this chapter, I contrast different responses to the language programme and access to further education and training administered by the Jobcenter. This could represent different things for people from different socio-economic backgrounds and aspirations and expectations for the future. For those seeking white-collar work, or skilled blue-collar jobs, the programme was the embodiment of why Germany was a good place to migrate, offering opportunities to achieve masculine self-realisation and belonging. For those looking for "low-skilled work", as well as aspiring traders and small business owners, however, a programme designed to facilitate pathways into work could be experienced as the largest obstacle to "becoming something" in Germany.

Chapter 2 continues with a focus on the lived experience of state policies as the terms of inclusion and exclusion. While Germany could be seen by many as a place that provided opportunities to train and find work, it necessitated a period in which the state supported individuals, providing rent and a monthly stipend among other things. For many, this was experienced as a source of stigma that turned them into the emasculated figure of a "dependent refugee". Similar to recent scholarship, I show attempts to deflect and overcome such stigma through masculinising strategies, such as "comparative strategies of self" which construct a hierarchy between the self and "abject others" as well as through discourses of reciprocity.

However, the chapter also expands much recent work by revealing how accessing welfare in encounters with the Jobcenter could constitute the site for asserting dignity. This is because welfare was seen as something to claim and to negotiate, turning the association of welfare from dependency and helplessness into a site of risk, strategy and resilience and entailing a process of making claims to rights.

Chapter 3 considers how my interlocutors respond to the role of gender norms as terms of belonging in Germany, the so-called "integration imperative". It resists a culturalising explanation for the often rigid rejection and public defiance of such norms by showing how refusing to "integrate" in sites such as the compulsory orienteering course could become a symbol of virtues of autonomy and authenticity and therefore a source of dignity in their stigmatised position as refugees in Germany. In contrast, to publicly assent to or practice such norms, "to be integrated", could be rebuked as evidence of people who "assimilate" and "do not think for themselves". However, precisely because responses were shaped by reaction to the "integration imperative", there could be the expression of a very different discourse about gender relations in other contexts, offering terms by which to represent themselves as "modern" men who belong in Germany.

Chapter 4 explores the consequences for my interlocutors of the prominence of the far right in Dresden. In doing so, it seeks to address an absence in the literature on the experience of refugees and ethnic minority groups of living in the vicinity of a vocal and active far-right. I distinguish between, on the one hand, everyday experiences of hostility and discrimination which were often associated with the far right and its sympathisers, and, on the other, the organised far right, in particular Pegida and AfD. For many of my friends, experiences of harassment and discrimination produced a sense of exclusion and powerlessness in which the best response was to keep a low profile and avoid trouble. This differed, however, to encountering the presence of far right movements or political parties which could be perceived as a fringe, "abject Other", opening up a space for solidarity with the mainstream public that was otherwise difficult to achieve. Counter-intuitively, I argue, the far right could afford a space to assert and display "responsible masculinity" and make a claim as worthy citizens-to-be in Germany.

Chapter 5 focusses on friendship, sociality and what one interlocutor characterised as the "flavour of life" (*ṭaʿm ilḥaya*). It considers how my interlocutors valorised the importance of care and responsibility between friends, family and within communities as the expression of recent work on "emergent masculinity". Going further than elucidating the "caring" side of men, the chapter shows how this was a source of dignity in contrast to the host society, in what

has been characterised as "reverse stigmatisation". Yet while discourses of "reverse stigmatisation" are often seen as cementing difference and producing distance, I show how in the context of Dresden they could serve to open up space for refugees to contribute to the host society as a "gift" to give Germans. Ironically, however, at the same time as friendship and social relations take on new meaning and become a source of pride, they could become the object of mistrust and uncertainty as a result of the context of displacement.

Chapter 6 explores differences between Syrians and Palestinians in relation to political activism in Dresden. Syrians often criticised activism as out of place in Germany, even as they expressed strong anti-regime sentiment in private. One reason for this is the way that campaigning for Syria was perceived to construct Syrians as forcibly displaced, refugee-victims, in contrast to valorised figures of "citizens-to-be". For Palestinians, however, campaigning for Palestine was often part and parcel of everyday life in Germany and was not problematised to the same extent because it was not seen to produce a tension between refugee identity and citizenship in Germany. Yet even as political activism for Palestinians was seen to embody masculine virtues and their rights as citizens-to-be, such activism could risk exclusion through its association with anti-Semitism and the way it could come to embody the figure of the threatening, male Muslim "Other".

Chapter 1
Becoming Something

Yasin, who is in his late fifties and from Syria, was telling me about things he did and did not like about Germany when we were sitting in the living room of the apartment he shared with his wife, Layla, and their son, Manar. Like many of my Syrian and Palestinian interlocutors, there were rules and restrictions he found surprising and disappointing when he arrived in Dresden, such as the rule that made it impossible to use the barbecue they bought close to their home. However, one thing Yasin appreciated in Germany was the way that they put a piece of wood to support a young tree to stop it growing at an angle or falling over in the wind. Almost all the trees have this support, he observed. In Syria, they don't do this, and the trees grow at all angles, or they do it but the wood is so weak that it blows over in the wind and the tree falls over with it.

Yasin's observation about the wood that supports young trees is a good analogy for the perception of many of my interlocutors of the kind of support they receive from the state in Germany through a package of integration policies and access to social security. Germany's Integration Act passed in August 2016 pledged to give refugees more and earlier opportunities to access integration classes and chances to enter work and training, while reducing benefits for those who do not fulfil their duties to learn German or apply for jobs. As part of this, Germany has made an "exemplary investment", committing billions of dollars to refugee welfare and "hiring and training more than ten thousand new employees and German language teachers" (Pearlman 2017, 325). Germany offered refugees perhaps the most promising

possibilities of achieving social adulthood and, with it, inclusion in the state as *productive* members of society.

Yet the analogy of wood supporting trees can also be extended. The same wood that helps a young tree stay upright and grow straight can also prevent it growing in different directions. It fixes the tree in its place and tries to get it to grow the way it should – the way that is preconceived by the state, or local authority, as being for its own good. In the case of the integration course, what could be experienced as supportive and the means of going the right direction in the future, could also be experienced as restrictive, preventing new opportunities and choices. Rather than enabling social adulthood and belonging, the support could lead Syrians and Palestinians in Germany to feel they were in the wrong place. In this chapter, I explore aspirations for the future of my interlocutors and how these intersected with the pathways offered by the state. Specifically, I explore how different classed aspirations for "masculine maturity" produced different responses to the programme of integration.

There has been critique of traditional approaches to life-stages, in which youth is seen as part of a linear process of transition from one discrete phase to another often marked by certain "vital events", such as marriage. Johnson-Hank has shown for her interlocutors in southern Cameroon that "the key transitions that might be seen as aspects of adulthood do not occur at the same time or in the same order; their occurrences are not highly correlated, and many of them are reversible" (2002, 869). There are, as Vigh notes, multiple ways to transition to adulthood, and some youth may not seek to transition to adulthood at all (2006). At the same time, however, caution about the inevitability of transitions from youth to adulthood does not mean that such transitions are not significant in people's lives. This recognises that vital events are a powerful "emic reality" (Christiansen et al 2006, 14) and reflect "structural expectations" from family and society (Ghannam 2013). What this draws attention to is the process of transitioning to adulthood as an important source of aspiration for youth. In the case of many young Arab men, the markers of adulthood have been identified as "employment, home, marriage and socio-cultural knowledge of society" (Peteet 1994; Suerbaum 2017; Ghannam 2013).

Forced displacement does not necessarily change the pursuit of personal and social aims and expectations, and it is often unhelpful to draw a distinction between economic migrants and forced migrants (Jansen 2008). However, scholars have shown how protracted displacement can undermine these aims, or what Lovell has termed the "achievement of adulthood" (Lovell 2006, 232). Displacement can produce a sense of "stuckness" in pathways

to adulthood as refugees and asylum seekers face "protracted and radical uncertainty" (Horst & Grabska 2015). Such uncertainty about the future, such as waiting to return or third-country resettlement, can lead to life stages "being put on hold" (El-Shaarawi 2015). Europe has for decades been the destination for migrants from Africa to seek to escape "social death" but without official refugee status, such migrants are unable to work legally and can face conditions of protracted poverty, violence and uncertainty (Lucht 2011; Gaibazzi 2013). In the case of migrants who gain refugee status in Europe, the focus has often been the challenges and loss of status suffered by middle-class men, both young and old, who can find their aspirations difficult to realise in the new context (Jansen 2008; Kleist 2010).

In this chapter I focus on my interlocutors' aspirations to find work and, with it, to have the means to cease to be *"shabāb"*, or youth, and reach what Osella and Osella (2000) have termed "masculine maturity". There was often a sense of maturity that came from the journey to Germany, living alone and in some cases taking responsibility for younger siblings in the absence of parents (see also Suerbaum 2017). However, for almost all my friends, finding work and no longer relying on the Jobcenter for support were the terms by which they sought to "become men". At the same time, finding work, or entering a training or education programme that would lead to work, was the site in which they articulated the claim to belong in Germany. This reflects what has been termed as a "neoliberal citizenship regime" (Vandevoordt & Verschragen 2019a), or "market citizenship" (Nawyn 2002), in which "contributing" rather than "taking" from the state is indicative of "deservingness" or "worthiness" to belong (Tobin 2018). The connection between being productive men and claims to citizenship was embodied in terms for the right to remain in Germany, which included not receiving state support for two years, either through work or entering an education or training programme.

In exploring aspirations to achieve social adulthood and belonging, I follow Appadurai who argues that anthropology has been focussed on "pastness" and that the ethnographic lens should be oriented towards aspiration, anticipation and imagination (2013). This leads us towards what has been termed the "near future", which offers a view of "how people position themselves – cognitively, morally, spiritually and practically – to be open to future possibilities." (Cooper & Pratten 2015, 12) It is precisely this *positioning* that I focus on in this chapter, as I explore how responses to labour market integration policies were conditioned by the nature of aspirations to achieve masculine maturity. These responses overlap with but also extend beyond class boundaries. On the one hand, I share the findings of McSpadden (1999) who has shown the benefits of migration to Sweden compared to the US for her middle-class

male Eritrean and Ethiopian interlocutors, where they could access language classes and further education. Among my interlocutors, men from often middle-class backgrounds could find the programme comprehensible and that it fit relatively unproblematically within a schema of learning and education as the means of proving oneself and finding skilled work. This was also often the case too for men looking to do an *Ausbildung* (vocational training) in order to become qualified in a skilled trade. On the other hand, those looking to enter lower-skilled or manual work, as well as men who aspired to be small business owners or traders, could experience the integration programme as limiting and therefore an obstacle to the fulfilment of their aspirations for the future and the possibility to belong in Germany. What I draw attention to therefore is the relationship between diverse aspirations for the "near future" and consequent responses to the integration programme as both the means and impediment to achieving social adulthood and belonging.

"You need to become someone"

Graw and Schielke (2012) suggest that a more appropriate image than a dinghy on the Mediterranean Sea for Sub-Saharan African migrants to Europe is the image of the house "built by the migrant, often higher than its surroundings and with walls of reinforced concrete or red brick… often empty for most of the year" (2012, 8). Their point is that migration to Europe is often oriented by migrants to being able to return to their hometown as socially recognised adults – to own a house and to get married. Although my friends did not discuss return to Syria, at least not any time soon, migration was often articulated in analogous terms to the house in the village: the pursuit of masculine maturity.

Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden were often asked what they wanted to be in the future and there was rarely much doubt in people's responses, reflecting the way that encounters with a supervisor at the Jobcenter, or discussions in language classes, or conversations with Germans in other contexts often seemed to include questions about the future. A number of my interlocutors would say they intended to become an "engineer" or a "doctor", or a similar professional, high-skilled employment, and what for most of my friends was "men's work". These responses reflect what Inhorn and Isidoros have described as the process by which forced displaced men seek to turn displacement from a picture of helplessness and victimhood into a site of "pride and success" (2018). Migration in these accounts becomes a site of agency as steps men took to "achieve" adulthood. This represents a masculinising

discourse which serves to turn refugees into individuals seeking economic opportunity who *chose* to come to Germany. Indeed, for many of my interlocutors, coming to Germany was not a result of fleeing Syria directly but happened after spending years in countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Coming to Germany certainly promised more security in terms of the right to remain and nationality, but it was primarily determined by the opportunities available to train, work and earn an income. Some knew a great deal about Germany and had hoped to migrate even before the outbreak of war, like a doctor I met who was able to start practising medicine soon after he was accepted as a refugee because he had spent years learning German in Syria. Most people did not describe having any intention of coming to Germany but regretted that when they knew they would migrate they had not begun making preparations in Syria to learn German in order to speed up the process of integration and finding work.

Figure 4 - Advert for an *Ausbildung* and job fair close to the main train station in Dresden (Photo by author, 2018)

When my interlocutors discussed the reason to migrate to Germany they would sometimes avoid mentioning the conflict in Syria altogether. Jensen and Löfving have described how there is often a discourse of "moral distinction" among migrants who are forcibly displaced compared to "economic migrants" who "voluntarily" leave their place of origin (2007, 8). I often heard something similar and my friends would contrast themselves positively to migrants

from Morocco, for example. There was a sense that people who migrated to Europe to look for work were in some respects morally suspect. Nonetheless, it was common to represent migration from Syria as being about a choice and the pursuit of new opportunities, as much if not more than fleeing the conflict in Syria. Some people would describe this as being about meeting women, but more common were the economic opportunities of coming to Germany. In fact, on a few occasions I watched debates between friends about the extent to which migration to Germany should foremost be classified as a consequence of the conflict, or a result of taking new opportunities for education, training and work. The debate centred on whether the initial cause for leaving Syria was the primary way of defining migration, or whether it was the decision to come to Germany itself from sites of secondary migration. In most cases, people agreed that conflict was the cause of leaving Syria in the first place, and the decision to come to Germany was the possibilities it offered for the future.

Migration as a choice to achieve self-realisation, such as becoming a doctor or engineer, was intimately connected to opportunities in Germany. It was common for people to describe how in Germany "you have to become someone" because of the opportunities provided by access to training and education. This view was summed up by Suhail, who is in his mid-twenties from eastern Syria and had completed his degree in Syria before fleeing to Germany in late 2015. He characterised the opportunities of being a registered refugee in Germany in the following terms,

> A refugee here needs to try to be better. Needs to do something better in his life. Needs to take something from this experience. In Lebanon, there is no work. The Lebanese don't have work, so you look for any work. In Germany, you have lots of opportunities. You can go to university. You can find opportunities to work. You can do an *Ausbildung*. You feel your situation is better.

In the view of Suhail, unlike the situation for Syrians in Lebanon, Germany offers opportunities for self-realisation, including university, work, or entering vocational education, managed through encounters with the supervisor at the Jobcenter. Suhail reflects what McSpadden (1999) has shown for her Somalian and Eritrean interlocutors in the US who aspired for the same high-status careers they aimed for before migrating, therefore showing how forced displacement did not lead to the expectation of a loss of status. However, this notion of "becoming someone" was not reserved to individuals like Suhail who migrated to Germany

with a degree from Syria and whose parents were professionals. I noticed that people from diverse backgrounds and who may not have anticipated going to university to study in fields such as engineering or medicine would describe similar intentions in Germany. Akram, for instance, who was in his early twenties and came from a small city in northern Syria would often describe his desire to become an airplane engineer. His aspiration was a jump in social status and represented the expectation of new opportunities in Germany.

In contrast to what scholars have described as the "stuckness" experienced in displacement, my interlocutors could describe migration to Germany as a place where "you will have more of a future". This reflects the kinds of opportunities that were associated with the integration programme. Since 2016, all refugees must attend a programme of "integration" in Germany which is overseen and managed by the Jobcenter on behalf of BAMF, *Bundesamt für Migranten und Flüchtlinge* (the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). The Jobcenter is responsible in Germany for anyone who fulfils three criteria: poverty, the legal right to work, and the capacity to work at least 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. Phillippe Schäfer, who manages the migration division of the Jobcenter in Dresden, defined the role of the Jobcenter in an interview as first securing "a basic standard of living" (*Lebensunterhalt*), and second getting people into work as a way to take people out of "need" (*Bedürftigkeit*). These two responsibilities are tied together as funding for accommodation, healthcare costs, language training and the monthly stipend are given on condition of participation in, and completion of, processes of finding a job. When someone joins the Jobcenter, whether refugee, migrant or German citizen, they are asked to sign a contract in which they commit to actions such as preparing job applications and attending interviews.

The focus of the state for enabling access to the workplace for refugees begins with assistance to learn German. The *Integrationskurs* (integration course) provides classes from A1 to B1 of the Common European Framework and includes the three-week orienteering course. Each class is 200 hours long and takes about two months to complete followed by a test which needs to be completed in order to enter the next level, and everyone is strongly encouraged by consultants at the Jobcenter to complete this programme. Schäfer explained, "In the beginning no one can speak the language, so they all have to learn the language. The better or the further your language develops, it is now time to look, what do you have for an education?" Following language classes, Jobcenter claimants are encouraged to pursue further education and training if they do not have evidence of qualifications because of the difficulty of finding well-paid work without it in Germany. He continued,

> If I have no qualifications, if I am untrained, then there are simply not the places where I can earn 2,500 euros… you have to teach the young person that it is better to get an education even if it takes longer, but in the long term, of course, leads me to lead a problem-free life.

What this shows is that the Jobcenter places emphasis on learning German and afterwards entering training and further education. Completing the stages of the language programme was the measure of progress for the Jobcenter towards determining options for training and education. It is therefore unsurprising that many of my interlocutors saw language as essential to "becoming something" in Germany. As one friend, Noor, who struggled to learn German and failed the B1 test, told me one day when we were on the tram home from the B1 class: "language is like the key to Germany" (*Il-lugha yakūn mtl il-miftaḥ l-almānya*).

One important symbol of progress was reflected in language certificates. These would be shared with family, a girlfriend, as well as social groups in Dresden and Germany. The messages would often be a single picture of the certificate, which in the case of the B1 and B2 certificates showed the final result and a breakdown of the different parts of the exam - reading, writing, listening and speaking. Learning German was often a feature of my friends' representation of their progress in Germany, reflecting what Amara (2018) has described in the context of Palestinians learning Hebrew in Israel as the "bragging factor", in which mastering Hebrew affords social prestige as a result of its association with power and modernity. On the phone to parents or a girlfriend, it was common for someone to reference a particular instance in which they commanded the language in an everyday situation or received recognition from a German person.

In the event of not passing a test, however, there could be a powerful sense of failure and regret. This was the case for Omar, who was in his early twenties from a city in eastern Syria and whose father was a doctor. Much to his surprise and everyone else's in our class, he failed the B1 language test and I met up with him shortly after he found out. He said, "when they told me, I forgot how to speak German […] I just said, *wie… wie…* (how… how…)." For Omar, who aspired to study medicine and become a doctor like his father, failing the test was a big blow. He described failing as one of the worst things that had happened to him since he got to Germany and situated it in a sequence of events that included the death of his girlfriend in Syria and having to flee his hometown and leave his parents. He was distraught that he would

be unable to call his mother to tell her that he passed and make her proud and he was disappointed with his friends Khalid and Jessica who had collected their results at the same time, who he described as laughing and joking and talking about their future. Omar told me his anxieties about his Arab friends finding out he had failed and he refused to turn on his phone to avoid speaking to anyone. In the particular context of Germany, language played a key role in asserting the claim to competency and managing the new environment. In fact, although he didn't tell me, I saw the lengths at which Omar sought to keep "face" when I met a mutual friend of ours, Rami. He mentioned that he had seen Omar and he had told him that he passed the B1 test!

The progress embodied in attaining different language levels was not only about pathways to masculine maturity, they were also essential to the process of negotiating inclusion in Germany.

The Right to Remain

The conversations of my interlocutors were often preoccupied with the question of what needed to be done by when in order to guarantee the right to remain (*qadm liju'*). The terms for the right to remain were often described as clear and well-defined but I noticed that my interlocutors often had contrasting ideas about what they included. There were variations about the required language level and number of years in work or training. Nonetheless, it always entailed achieving a particular language level, no longer receiving support from the Jobcenter, and a clean criminal record. The extent to which this was such a source of discussion reflects the level of speculation about the impact of different factors, such as the difference between Palestinians and Syrians (see Chapter 6), and comparisons between Germany and other states in Europe.

The terms of the right to remain reflect what Ong has described as the way that citizenship is "increasingly associated with neoliberal criteria" (Ong 2006, 6). Neoliberalism refers to the process of governing with a market rationality and is associated with attacks on big government and the bureaucratic welfare state. As a political philosophy it sees the market as better than the state in distributing public resources and fosters individualism and competitiveness. The consequences of neoliberalism is de-regulation, the growth of flexible working, reduction in public spending and public assets, and the liberalisation of capital (Hilgers 2011). There are contrasting approaches to neoliberalism, but one influential approach

considers neoliberalism in Foucauldian terms as a "mode of political optimisation" (Ong 2006, 3). Ong identifies two such "optimising technologies": "technologies of subjectivity", meaning that citizens optimise their knowledge in order to be competitive in the market-place, and "technologies of subjection", regulating populations in order to increase their productivity. As Hilgers writes, "The self is developed and conceived of as an enterprise in a competitive framework that leads individuals to manage themselves in accordance with the logic of the market." (2011, 358). The neoliberal subject is encouraged not to make claims on the state, but rather to become an "enterprising citizen-subject". Syrians in Jordan, for example, are expected to conform to the neoliberal ideal that refugees are "contributors" not "takers" from the local and national economy (Tobin 2018). It is in this context that we see the emergence of a "neoliberal citizenship regime" in Europe (Vandevoordt & Verschragen 2019a, 43), in which "deservingness" is associated with financial autonomy and acceptance of local cultural norms, or cultural assimilation, often proven through passing tests.

The role of learning German was important in estimations of the terms of the right to remain because passing B1 level of German and completing the orienteering course was one of its requirements. Learning German was also seen as the means to enter work and training and was therefore the terms by which to become autonomous from the Jobcenter. The association between learning German and the right to remain is reflected in comments by Omar after he eventually passed the B1 exam. Months after he failed, he re-took the exam without telling anyone using his own money, rather than face a delay of a number of months to be able to re-take the exam with funding from the Jobcenter. When he excitedly told me about passing, he conveyed his strong conviction that things were now back on track. In fact, he had come to see failing the exam as fate, which enabled him to join the *Abitur* (A-level) programme. He told me when we sat together to discuss the programme, "There is a year and a half before my visa is extended. By then I will have C1 and I will be away from the Jobcenter, then I can stay forever! Anyone bad (*mw kwiyys*) will be thrown out", and he flicked his hand away. For Omar, failing the B1 exam had been a barrier on his path to self-realisation. At the same time, his comment shows that failing the exam was bound-up with terms of inclusion and citizenship in Germany and the right to remain. After he passed the exam, he could confidently assert his right "to stay forever", and he distinguished himself from "anyone bad" – anyone incapable of learning German, or of bad character, or both, as the two could often be closely linked. His discourse reflects what Monforte et al. (2019) describe as the way that migrants endorse the neoliberal "deservingness frame" and its "us and them" logic.

What this shows is the complementarity between notions of achieving manhood and fulfilling the terms of the right to remain. This is brought together in the anxieties about finding work of one of my interlocutors, Mohammed. Mohammed had completed a degree before coming to Germany but was unable to validate it and therefore felt that he had to begin again. One evening at his apartment after the federal elections in September 2017 when the far-right AfD entered the Bundestag with a dramatic 12.6% of the vote, largely on the basis of an anti-refugee and so-called "anti-Islamisation" discourse, he explained to me that he was determined to find an *Ausbildung* and to study a subject related to economics, such as accountancy. The attraction of such a course was that he would be able to work as quickly as possible. He told me,

> I just want to become something. I am 25, and I feel like I have achieved nothing in my life, nothing. I just want to go the fastest way towards getting a job […] My degree is worthless. And now I am worried that if I don't get a job quickly, they will throw me out of the country, you saw how AfD got a majority here in Saxony.

What Mohammed's anxieties reflect is the interconnection between "becoming something", through finding work, and the right to remain. He not only wanted to find work as quickly as possible because he is in his mid-twenties and feels he has yet to achieve something in life, but also because this is the condition of remaining in Germany. He worries that not finding work and supporting himself will result in being "thrown out of the country" by a resurgent far-right. Despite his anxieties and frustration of being unable to verify his degree, succeeding in Germany's programme of integration was the means of becoming something and negotiating the right to remain.

Omar and Mohammed both endorsed the state's terms of inclusion despite their uncertainties. They saw that learning German and getting access to a training programme offered the means to achieve masculine maturity and to negotiate their inclusion in the neoliberal citizenship regime. Not everyone was so confident about the state's mechanism for inclusion, however. For many, there remained a lingering sense of doubt, and my friends would weigh up the likelihood of being sent back to Syria. As a "European" who might be able to offer some insight, I would often find myself put on the spot in these conversations when someone asked, "Philip, they won't send us back, will they?" Suhail encapsulated this uncertainty. I described above Suhail's conviction about the importance of "trying to be better"

in Germany, which I introduced as the way in which Germany was the site of pathways to manhood through access to training and education rather than being forced into low-paid work. After a meeting at which he was told the Jobcenter would not fund him to do the B2 language course and he instead needed to do the six-month *Maßnahme* - a programme that provides training in German and skills for looking for work - which he, like most people I spoke to, considered a waste of time, he told me:

> It is still early. You need to think about the fact that they might tell you, that's it. Maybe they will not give you the visa. You might have to return to Syria […] I will try to do things right. But I explained to you I don't like to think about the future a lot, it is because not everything will happen as I want it to.

In late 2017, therefore, there remained uncertainty about people's future in Germany, which was exacerbated by the success of the anti-immigration AfD in the 2017 federal elections. Striving in language programmes especially was the site of both "becoming something" as well as negotiating inclusion – "trying to do things right", as Suhail says, in order to fulfil expectations of the state. Yet if this was the case for many of my interlocutors, for others the language classes and programme of integration were experienced as a site of exclusion. Rather than the wood supporting a young tree, it could be seen as a straitjacket.

"The certificate? My dick."

Laith and I would meet at his apartment or a small bar at the bottom of the building next door to drink beer. He is from a village in the west of Syria and is in his early twenties. Before leaving Syria he had opened his own hairdressing salon with money from his father, but now he needed to do a number of years language learning and training to be able to get the necessary qualifications to be able to open a salon in Germany. It was in this context that Laith at a point during most the evenings we spent together would become serious and without prompting explain what "Germany" is doing wrong with refugees. I sensed this was cathartic for him and offered a means of justifying a way of life he described as "lazy" (*kslān*) and "disgusting" (*wiskh*) because of his messy apartment and habit of staying out late. He explained, "All Syrians have knowledge and competency of a trade", but in Germany "they are being made to sit" (*lāzm yqʿd*) through the need to learn German and gain formal qualifications. It was in the context of

such a discussion that Laith once explained to me that he was a more capable hairdresser than Germans, saying, "I didn't study how to cut hair, but I am better than a hundred European hairdressers who have a certificate! The certificate? My dick (*ziby*)." One example of how he distinguished himself from European hairdressers was through not using the hair clipper, unlike German hairdressers, which he complained does not look good.

What Laith conveyed is his technical mastery as a hairdresser in contrast to Germans despite, or rather because of, his lack of a "certificate". His frustration with being unable to open a salon is not simply the time and difficulty of getting the necessary qualifications because of the challenge of learning German to B2 level, but also the assumption in Germany that such qualifications are necessary or desirable. What he dismissively refers to as "the certificate" (*ilshahadeh*) produces hairdressers who rely on the blunt instrument of the hair clipper. Laith, on the other hand, is capable of making anyone look like any picture they bring. Such an extravagant display of his own capabilities in contrast to German hairdressers can be read as "reverse stigmatisation" by someone whose capabilities are not recognised in the host society and is unable to work (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of "reverse stigmatisation"). This kind of defence and valorisation of the capabilities of Syrians was common among my friends. For instance, Syrian doctors were often compared favourably to German doctors. I was told a number of times that while German doctors are slow and rely on blood tests and complex machines, Syrian doctors are much more intuitive and capable of telling you what is wrong from a few simple observations and tricks.

Alongside cynicism about learning and education in Germany, there were other opinions. When I asked friends the best thing about German society, they would often reply that it was the culture of learning. Laith, for example, said this was one of the things he admired in Germany, and gave the example of Germans reading books on public transport. However, the culture of learning was seen to come at the expense of being competent with your hands. One image of moral distinction I was told was that Arabs, unlike Germans, intuitively learn a range of practical skills through spending holidays from school helping their father, brother or uncle to do skilled work, such as plumbing, construction, or car maintenance. One interlocutor, Hasan, who is Palestinian from Syria and worked as a butcher in one of the new Arab supermarkets in Dresden, explained this to me one evening when we talked at Khalid's house. In a long discussion about the difference in culture and society between Syria and Germany, he talked about how Germans, unlike Syrians, do not know how to use their hands. I quote from my fieldnotes,

> They complained that in Germany everyone just studies. You see people who are 20 years old and don't know how to do anything. They don't learn with their hands. Studies? They are not important. What's important is that you know how to do things with your hands. This is what finds you work and is useful.

For Hasan, what matters is the capacity to be able to do things with your hands, which is learnt through the way of life of working class boys and young men in Syria. He told me that he learnt skills in construction from working with his father during holidays from school, which he contrasted to Germans who take time off during holidays. He boasted, "If you were to give me the equipment and materials, I could build you a house right now." At which point, the others in the group laughed and made fun of him, in part, I think, because of Hasan's reputation for drinking and smoking *hashish*. Nonetheless, there was a broadly shared working-class, masculine ideal of work, toil and productivity which contrasted learning through "doing" with other male family members to the formal education of Germans.

This ideal evokes the figure of the "master" in Elyachar's study of workshops and microenterprises in the region of El-Hirafiyeen in Cairo. The knowledge of a master is the result of learning over a lifetime and is the embodiment of a *shaʿbi*, or popular, ideal of the masculine man. She writes, "the master [who] begins to gain his mastery as a child worker (*sabi*) becomes a man in the biological, social and professional senses of the word." (2011, 101) What Elyachar describes about the ideal of competency of the master shares with the discourse of Laith, Hasan and others. In fact, one such master described by Elyachar, Ibrahim, who is able to diagnose the problem with any car just by listening to it as it enters the garage from his office, is similar to how Laith described the competencies of his friend's father. He told me a story about how a wealthy German thought that his expensive Volkswagen was broken but the father of his friend, who is unable to work in Germany, was able to fix it when no German could.

Elyachar explains that the figure of the master is constructed through "social power" in a "habitus performed by masters daily in a network of relations with workers, family members, customers and officials." (Ibid, 101) This social power is reflected in the way that the master is inseparable from the workshop, so when a master says "I", it could be himself or the workshop, showing how it is embedded in his person. Mastery is transmitted across generations in a lineage, or *nasab*, which can be a son, relative or a neighbour. Furthermore, as Elyachar

notes, the most important thing a master can pass on is often "goodwill" with customers rather than know-how, which is liable to change. This social power was invoked by Laith in the process of being hired; in contrast to the kinds of alienation and bureaucracy and superficiality of what Laith dismissed as "the certificate", he described an ideal of the competency of the master in being able to judge and appraise through a look, and finding work as embedded in a known social world. He said,

> Here you can't work unless you have an *Ausbildung*. In Syria, there is none of this talk (*mafī hada l-ḥakī).* You go to a guy, *"ya muʿlim*, Philip wants to work at your place. Is it possible?" He looks at you like this [he looked me up and down].
> "Yes, I want someone. OK, come work."
> "But I don't know how to work."
> "No problem. Come and I will teach you."

Laith's description of how the "master" (or *muʿlim*) would look an apprentice up and down shows a very different mode of appraisal to the system in Germany. Rather than relying on a certificate, he is able to employ someone based on a look. Laith also depicts an ideal of society in which the master *"*is known, a neighbour or family friend, as opposed to the distance, alienation and indifference associated with certificates and job applications. Laith therefore problematises the integration programme according to a working-class ideal of "mastery" which emphasises "situated learning" and the role of the apprentice, and work that is embedded in social relationships. However, critique was not only on the basis of proper notions of learning and finding work shared by working class men with a trade. It was shared by others who saw it as limiting their freedom to pursue opportunities in the flux of everyday life in Germany.

A Shop of One's Own

It was common for my friends to characterise Syrians as natural traders who are able to squeeze out economic opportunities from any context. This is a discourse that is shared in other contexts, such as among Syrian refugees in Egypt (Suerbaum 2016) and in Jordan (Tobin & Alahmed 2019). In Germany, however, the state's policies of integration could be seen as restricting such "natural" propensity to trade and start businesses and with it pathways to adulthood and belonging. The Jobcenter could be experienced as impeding the kind of mobility

and flexibility that allowed them to seize new opportunities. Like others, Talal hoped to own a shop or small business in Dresden. Talal is Palestinian from Syria and left Syria when he was young after a period doing various informal jobs in Lebanon. In a conversation with Talal about work one day, he described to me what he considered as "real" work. He explained that the common "mini-job", where work was limited to 15 hours a week, or the "1-euro job", compulsory work for someone not attending the integration course or doing any other education or training, was not real work. For Talal, real work was "private work" (*shugl khāṣ*),

> Not working for someone, or working for a company, or anything else. Something private to you. You open a shop, or a small company; even if you have a car and you work with it.

Talal articulates what Rabo (2005) has identified as the place of a "shop of one's own" as the embodiment of masculine aspiration. Rather than training to find work in a company, which is the pathway Talal sees as the inevitable consequence of the opportunities provided by the Jobcenter, Talal conceptualises being your own boss as real work. Talal had begun his own small business organising events for the Arab community in Dresden on occasions such as engagement parties, weddings and birthdays. However, this did not yet match his ideal of real work because he did not own the venues where he performed and was always hosted by his clients. He explained this would be work "when I rent a venue for a year or five years, and I arrange everything, and I am responsible." Real work is when you do not suffer the uncertainty of being an employee, conforming to the ideal of being an independent, masculine man. What Talal describes shares considerable similarity to owning a shop among traders in Aleppo as a mark of being "honourable, reputable, independent and settled men". But this is not reserved to traders, "all in Aleppo have become aspiring market men. But *a shop of one's own* has become a global aspiration." (Rabo 2005, 170)

My interlocutors would valorise people who had opened shops in Dresden, often individuals who had been living in the city for some time. When friends talked about opening businesses, it was in most cases a food shop, a café, a *ḥilwīyāt* shop (patisserie), a shisha lounge, or a restaurant. Bassem, for example, who came from what he described as a wealthy family in eastern Syria through his father's work in the oil industry, was keen to become a trader in the future, plying his wares from Canada to Germany to Egypt, where he had spent time before coming to Germany. He told me, for instance, at the time of the embargo on Qatar by Saudi

Arabia and its allies in mid-2017, that he wanted to contact a number of local farmers around Dresden to arrange for the sale of German livestock to Qatar. He also described his ambition and hopes for opening a café or restaurant in Dresden. This came up one time when we walked along the banks of the River Elbe and he said suddenly, "I am very upset with myself". He pointed across the river to the construction of a large white tent on the opposite bank which he assumed was the idea he had been nurturing for some time of constructing a riverside café. He wanted to build a place similar to what you find in Istanbul, "A place where you can come and sit with your girlfriend and watch the small boats go by, something romantic."

A number of my friends became involved in the plans of a relative, family member or friend to open a new shop, restaurant or café. Akram, for instance, hosted his cousin from Hamburg for several days while he explored the potential for opening a shisha shop in Dresden, where renting shop space was considerably more affordable than in Hamburg. It was not only people who already had access to capital who imagined such ventures. In late 2017, in a matter of weeks it seemed that almost all of my friends had got hold of, or applied for, access to a credit card, after it had recently become known that a Swiss bank would provide cards to refugees. The cards were useful for many things, but among them was the possibility to build up credit for a project in the future and there were accounts of enterprising individuals who got a credit card and borrowed and returned money continuously in order to build up the amount they could borrow. I was told about a Syrian man in Munich, the cousin of someone I knew, who now had access to 7000 euros which he planned to use to begin a small food shop. The card could become the object of hope, of future plans and a mode of reckoning with a sense of stuckness.

There was often a tension between my friends who aspired to set up a business and to fulfil the figure of an independent small trader and entrepreneur, and the pathways offered by the Jobcenter. Rami was one of the sharpest critics of the programme of integration and the Jobcenter, which he dubbed "studies, studies, studies". Rami is in his early thirties and is Palestinian from Syria. He had held a number of jobs in various businesses and lines of work before migrating to Germany, including his uncle's perfume shop in Dubai. He would often enjoy talking about ideas for a business, and one such idea that often came up during the evenings I spent cooking and talking with Rami at his apartment on the top floor of a tower block was his idea set up a bikini shop on a beach in Greece. The business would initially just sell bikinis, he would joke, but then it could expand to include a bar and a small restaurant which would offer pizza and Arabic food. The bikinis would be sourced from China and they

would be good quality, but cheap, their price being kept down by buying in bulk. There were several iterations of Rami's vision as an independent business owner in the future, but it tended to come back to the bikini shop in Greece.

At one point Rami put into practice his entrepreneurial ambition by beginning a "black" business in Dresden with his friend. I first learnt about the project overhearing a phone call he made one evening when we were sitting together watching German documentaries and drinking coffee. The plan was to buy kitchens online and quickly resell them, joining what was a lively trade in Dresden using websites such as *Ebay Kleinanzeigen* (a local Ebay site), or Facebook groups such as "Syrians in Dresden". The difference with this business compared to others, Rami explained to me, was the scale. Others took one kitchen a week but he and his business partner aimed to buy a kitchen a day. They had contact with a Moroccan man who owned a van and would pick up the kitchen and deliver it to a storage place for twenty euros. They would clean the kitchen, make it look presentable and then put it online for a higher price, targeting Germans rather than Arabs because they would be willing to spend more. The issue was to find an affordable storage space and this was the topic of the conversation I overheard. Over the coming months, Rami was often busy picking up a kitchen, arranging transport, and going to the garage they eventually found in order to sell a kitchen to a client. His partner, who spoke and wrote German better, did the more time-consuming work of selecting kitchens, preparing adverts, and negotiating the price and viewings. It was a striking distinction to the kinds of inertness and fatigue of Rami in language classes. Rather than "studies, studies, studies" he was mobilising social capital, forging networks and discussing logistics.

For Rami and others, this aspiration was at odds with the means and possible futures offered by the integration programme. The Jobcenter offered a different kind of future – a long and slow process to access the job market. He would often say that "we don't have time to study" when he complained about the limitations of the integration programme as *the* pathway to self-realisation. He meant the several years learning German and accessing education was too slow, but it also went beyond this; for Rami, classes and education isolated him from the risk and immediacy of opportunities outside the classroom. Rami would talk about wanting to find any work, which would seem to encapsulate what Donaldson and Howson (2009) identified as the way male migrants and refugees will look for any work in order to fulfil a masculine role in the home. Yet I interpret Rami's aspiration differently. He was not motivated by a determination to leave the Jobcenter for permanent low-paid work, but rather the chance to "begin the future". It would place him in an arena of opportunity in which he came to know

the environment and people, and develop the skills, knowledge and capital he needed. As an aspiring entrepreneur who valorised the figure of the autonomous self-made individual, opportunities for self-realisation offered by the Jobcenter isolated him from the productive uncertainty of seeking work (Cooper & Pratten 2015).

The example that was often invoked and valorised by Rami and others who saw their future as business owners and entrepreneurs was that of previous migrants, such as Turkish guest workers, or *Gastarbeiter*. While in German public discourse there is a strong notion of Turkish-Germans forming an underclass in society, constituting the "abject Other" to the liberal German nation (Ewing 2012), in the perspective of some of my interlocutors, Turkish-Germans were a model to emulate. The contemporary Turkish-German community was seen as achieving success and wealth, they had opened businesses, become well-known sportspeople and even entered politics, such as the leader of the Green Party, Cem Özdemir. Unlike contemporary refugees, these successful migrants were not forced to sit in an integration course but rather came to Germany to work and became successful doing so.

This came up one evening when I visited Rami and a friend of his called Fuad also came over. Fuad's uncle had lived in Germany for many years and he contrasted his experience of looking for work with his uncle. He told us,

> It is a big mistake [the integration course]. It only started in 2010. My uncle did it then after 30 years being in Germany! If you look at the Tunisians, or Turks, they didn't study the language, but they all speak the language now. My uncle doesn't know how to write, and he opened a falafel factory.

As urban Palestinian-Damascenes, and as refugees, Fuad and Rami do not share much with the Turkish labourers who came to Germany as guest workers from rural Anatolia in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, the image of the Turkish guest worker becomes populated with their aspirations to use guile, independence and hard work to achieve self-realisation, and the embodiment of the limitations and strictures of pathways to self-realisation and social adulthood offered by the integration programme. Fuad's Palestinian uncle, who never had to do the integration programme, reflects this, having eventually established his own falafel factory, an ideal of entrepreneurialism and masculine self-realisation.

It has long been recognised that labour market integration policies in western European are not always effective (Korac 2002). One explanation for this is the difficulty some migrants

face completing language and training programmes to find work in the host country. This is the argument of a controversial article in *Die Welt* in 2015 titled, "Two-thirds can barely read or write". In the article, German economist Ludger Wößmann argues for the need to create schemes for alternative access to the workplace that don't depend on completing educational programmes in Germany. He makes this case based on the claim that 60% of Syrians have not completed basic school education and he backs this up with historic figures for refugees in Germany that show the majority tend to have less education and lower host-country language preparation than labour migrants. He cites figures showing that at least half of the refugees studying an *Ausbildung* in Munich failed the programme in 2015. The language programme could be a challenge for many of my friends, and the majority of people in the B1 class I attended failed the exam first time around. Yet, what the examples above show is the extent to which one of the major reasons that people did not engage with the programme of integration was the sense that the process and the future it offered did not accord with their gendered and classed aspirations for the future.

What emerges for both Laith and Rami is in striking contrast to what Sarah Tobin and Maisam Alahmed describe in the case of Syrians in Jordan, where Syrians face the opposite problem. Rather than being "forced to sit" in integration programmes that seek to enable Syrians and Palestinians to access education and training, their reputation as hard-workers in Jordan, something shared by Jordanian society, the government and NGOs, becomes the source of their exploitation. Notions that Syrians naturally enjoy hard work and are good at it "serve to normalize the idea that Syrians can, should be, and will be abused in their employment, and that this is an expected and anticipated occurrence." (Tobin & Alahmed 2019, 32) This leads to limitations in the kind of employment they can access, something many Syrians find frustrating. In Jordan, Syrians are not "prevented" from getting work, but this has its own limitations.

Hopes that Migrate

The integration programme was therefore not seen as offering the means by which to "become something" for Laith, Rami and others, but rather seemed designed to prevent them from being able to find work and reach social adulthood and to exclude them from belonging. In the same conversation at Laith's apartment which I referred to above, he complained about his sense of exclusion in Germany,

> Everyone who comes from Syria has a trade and knows how to do something well […] Germany needs to make use of this. At the moment we are all sitting. We take money from the Jobcenter and nothing. We don't give anything back. They don't ask for anything back.

Here Laith articulates his exclusion from the neoliberal citizenship regime in which being economically productive is the terms by which to negotiate one's "deservingness". The process of sitting and receiving money during the integration classes serves as the site of exclusion from citizenship in Germany because "they don't ask for anything back". He told me about a carpet maker from Aleppo he met in Dresden who used to own 12 factories and was producing the finest carpets in Syria. In Germany, however, the man is unable to work because of the need to learn the language. When I suggested that perhaps it was reasonable that he needed to speak German, Laith picked up a bottle and thundered back, "someone who makes bottles doesn't need to speak German; he just makes bottles. He doesn't need to talk to the bottles!" Laith's account of the way in which he and others, such as the Aleppan carpet maker, are not allowed to pay Germany back, shares with how Vandevoordt and Verschragen have conceptualised citizenship as a "gift" (2019a). They explain the determination of Syrian refugees not to accept their social right to receive welfare as reflecting the way that such rights are experienced as a "gift" they are unable to "return" because of the difficulty of finding well-remunerated work, therefore placing them in a position of moral subordination.

The result of the challenge or limitations to their particular pathways to masculine maturity was a sense of exclusion from the state. In his work with migrants from Guinea-Bissau in Portugal, Vigh (2009) describes how his interlocutors suffer "the impossibility of gaining a worthy life". He writes, "hope in such situations does not necessarily die out but migrates — ahead of the migrants that follow it" (105). His interlocutors come to see Portugal as a "trampoline" and imagine migrating elsewhere. In contrast to Vigh's case, however, where migrants do not have the legal right to work and find themselves trapped in low-paid and insecure work, Laith sought to escape what he perceived as integration policies which denied his freedom to work. He contrasted his situation in Germany to relatives in the US who he saw quickly entering work often through contacts from his village in Syria, typically in food stores and restaurants, generating what he saw as self-sufficiency and autonomy. Laith found this vision of the US appealing and he expressed his desire to migrate there one day. Rather than

being seen as the terms by which to optimise his participation in the job market in Germany, the integration programme was experienced as preventing his participation. He did recognise that such a scheme was effective for people entering skilled, high status work, telling me, "Germany is good if you want to be a doctor or an engineer, but not if you are like me." For people like him, Germany seemed to offer obstructions to work and therefore belonging.

This sense of exclusion was shared by others, such as Rami, who also saw opportunities to find work and to become independent elsewhere. For Rami, integration classes were experienced as preventing him from accessing opportunities offered by work. This was a vicious circle, because the expectation of employers that people complete the programme also made it difficult to find low-paid, low-skilled work without it. While the integration programme foreclosed particular futures, there were limited opportunities to find work without the language skills and training that it offered. In part, this was a particular problem in Dresden, as Phillippe Schäfer, manager of the integration division of the Jobcenter, told me, there was a high demand for low-paid and low-skilled work in Dresden which made it difficult for migrants who don't speak German to compete. Some months after I left Dresden, Rami did find work cleaning rooms at a hotel. However, the anti-social hours and abuse from management led him to give it up after a couple of months. Rami imagined migrating to Canada where, he told me, his friends "were allowed to find work". In similar terms to Laith, he saw Canada as a place where the state offered proper means of inclusion by enabling newcomers to work and, in the process, fulfil expectations of self-realisation and the terms of neoliberal citizenship. Rami would often complain that life in Germany was "complicated" when he talked about the need for a particular level of language and certificates and the extent of bureaucracy. I sensed that migration to Canada was seen as offering the chance to escape this complexity and achieve self-realisation in familiar terms. Others talked about migration to UK, which was imagined as similar to the US, where the state offered little assistance on the basis that migrants use their own resources to find work. This reflects what Nielsen (2004) has shown in the case of Somalis who migrate from Denmark to the UK, in part because of the long integration and language programmes in Denmark that are felt to prevent access to the workplace.

The perspective of Laith and Rami contrasts to the comparison drawn by McSpadden (1999) between Sweden and the US for migrants, where the former provides better opportunities through integration programmes. In the case of Laith and Rami, such mechanisms of welfare could be experienced as barriers to both manhood and citizenship. This draws out the distinction Laith makes between "doctors and engineers", similar to my interlocutors who

invested their aspirations for the future in completing the integration programme, and "people like him". This provides ethnographic expression to what has been noted as the limits to the "the emergence of a kind of 'standard package'" in labour market integration support measures in Europe (Martin et al. 2016, 9). Experts have suggested greater flexibility in integration policies and urge more immediate and alternative access to the labour market. They note that "self-employment is an important option in becoming independent from state subsidies and in improving social status", but in Germany "up until now self-employment has hardly been considered" (Ibid, 31).

Conclusion

There were complex responses among Syrian and Palestinian refugees to the pathways to masculine maturity and inclusion offered by the state in Germany. Labour market integration policies were seen by many from both middle and working class backgrounds as bound-up with the means of turning forced displacement into a site of masculine accomplishment. This could be fraught with uncertainty and frustration, through failing a language test, for example, or enduring anxiety about being able to remain in Germany. Nonetheless, the pathway offered by such policies was invested with aspirations for the future, as mature men, and the terms of inclusion. For others, such as men from working-class backgrounds with a trade, the integration programme could be experienced as a barrier to achieving social adulthood and the site of exclusion. The formalities of the programme of language learning and vocational education could be seen to offend proper pathways to finding work, which centred on the valorised figure of the "master" and "situated learning". In the case of aspiring entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses, the programme was lived as an impediment to the more proper work of amassing capital, developing social networks and following in the footsteps of the valorised figures of self-reliant migrants, such as the image of the successful Turkish guest worker. The consequence of the perception of barriers to a particular notion of self-realisation was also a sense of exclusion from belonging; being "forced to sit" was to be unable to pay into the state. This suggests, therefore, that the results of the programme of integration were variable; the extent to which such programmes offered the terms of gendered social adulthood and inclusion in the neoliberal citizenship regime were shaped by individuals' gendered and classed aspirations for the future.

Chapter 2
Negotiating Welfare

Omar and Laith both looked forward to no longer being dependent on the Jobcenter. They had just met when we were walking through streets in Neustadt during a festival one Saturday evening and they told each other how they would soon no longer be refugees. Omar, who was in his early twenties, was going to begin the Abitur *(A-levels) at school, and therefore would receive the student loan (BAföG) and not a stipend from the Jobcenter. Laith would begin work soon at a restaurant. When I asked what it means to no longer be a refugee, Laith said "It means that you don't get money from the Jobcenter, and they can't tell you what to do. For example, you can go where you want to go." For Omar and Laith, the meaning of "refugee" was not only a legal category but a description of their dependency on the Jobcenter and the control and limitations associated with it.*

My interlocutors often described coming to Germany as part of a process of skills training and an opportunity to find work. As I showed in the previous chapter, there was a coming together of conceptions of masculinity and neoliberal discourses in which worthiness was embedded in finding work, achieving independence, and providing for yourself. However, finding work was an aspiration for the near future that required, at the least, one or two years of learning German. During the 15 months I spent in Dresden, almost all my Syrian and Palestinian friends received support from the state and specifically the Jobcenter. The only exception to this was the few people who left the integration programme to take on generally low-paid jobs in Arab or Turkish-owned businesses. In this respect, welfare and contact with the Jobcenter were a constant and mundane aspect of everyday life. In addition to administering the *Integrationskurs*

and taking a number of steps to arrange work and skills training, the Jobcenter is responsible for providing refugees with the support required to sustain themselves in Germany, including rent for a home up to approximately 400 euros, a monthly stipend of 400 euros, health insurance and reduced tickets for public transport. The consequence of such support, as Omar and Laith suggest above, was various obligations, surveillance and restrictions. In this chapter, I explore the lived experience of receiving welfare from the Jobcenter and the responses of my interlocutors to the stigma of dependency. In particular, I complicate the understanding that displaced men seek to elide such stigma only through processes of distancing themselves from dependency. In the context of Germany, where most of my interlocutors had no real choice about whether to receive support from the state or not, the process of claiming benefits could become the site for the display not only of their dignity as masculine men, but also as "partial citizens" with rights to claim (Ong 2006).

Associations with the term "refugee" can vary (Zeno 2017), but very often it is a stigmatised identity (Ludwig 2016; Pearlman 2018). One of the main reasons for this is its association with dependency and negative attitudes towards refugees in host societies often centre around this. In the context of Germany, for example, Pearlman writes of media stereotypes that construct refugees as "lazy consumers of state welfare" (2018, 308). While in Chapter 1 I showed how masculine maturity and inclusion were associated with becoming economically independent in the terms of the "neoliberal citizenship regime", dependency on the Jobcenter could produce the opposite: a site of emasculation which undermined claims for inclusion. Scholars have conceptualised welfare and aid as a Maussian "gift" that creates "moral subordination" and indebtedness on the part of the receiver, in this case refugees, who must display their "gratefulness" and victimhood (Malkki 1992; Rozakou 2012; Harrell-Bond 1999). The consequences of dependency have been shown to be particularly stark for male migrants. As masculine identity is often centred on the role of "breadwinner" and "provider" of the home (Donaldson & Howson 2009), being unable to work and to fulfil this role, and becoming dependent on a state, NGO, or a family member, has been shown to have potentially far-reaching consequences for men's sense of self-worth (Kabachnik et al. 2013; Charsley & Wray 2015). The emasculation that accompanies dependency has been at the heart of work that shows how men may struggle more than women in the context of displacement (McSpadden 1993; Jansen 2008) and can lead to processes by which displaced men seek to actively disassociate themselves from this support (Jaji 2015; Suerbaum 2018).

This chapter explores the lived experience of male refugees who relied on state support and often expressed the stigma of such dependency. In fact, for many of my interlocutors, their aspirations to "become something" in Germany were closely connected to a period of being dependent on the state. As in the work of others, I am attentive to the discourses of my interlocutors who sought to distance themselves from dependency as a means of fashioning themselves as masculine men who are "worthy" of inclusion in the host society (Vandevoordt 2017; Monforte et al. 2019), but I also add complexity to this picture by revealing the very different discourses that emerged from encounters with the Jobcenter. Confronting bureaucracy was a constant part of everyday life, sharing with what Pearlman has noted for Syrian refugees in Germany who "felt that they dedicated the bulk of their time and energy to waiting for appointments and completing paperwork" (2017, 318). I explore encounters with the state that seem to foreground the powerlessness of my interlocutors, manifesting their need and inability to get by without the Jobcenter or to make basic decisions about their lives such as where to live and who to live with. Yet I noted a pattern in which such encounters were inscribed with masculine agency by my interlocutors who would boast of their cleverness and self-control. In addition, these experiences of encountering the welfare office reveal a stark contrast to a neoliberal construction of citizenship which was often shared by Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden, in which "deservingness" was a function of economic productivity and financial autonomy. In their accounts of agency at the Jobcenter, welfare was not a gift that debases them, but a *right* to be claimed and strategically negotiated, reflecting what Isin and others have referred to as an "act of citizenship" (2013). How a stigmatising fact of life as refugees in Germany could become the stage for dignity draws attention to the malleability of masculinity and refugee identity for my interlocutors.

"This is not money from me"

> The regime would never give you money without working […] you feel that there is something wrong, this is not my money. When it's your money, and you are tired from it, you feel *qimeh* (value) from money.

This is what Rami told me one morning when he realised that his monthly stipend (*rātib*) from the Jobcenter had not been paid because he had not sent the paperwork for the annual registration. Missing out on his monthly stipend and the challenge it presented for getting by

the next few weeks prompted Rami to reflect on his circumstances as being dependent on the financial support of the Jobcenter. As was often the case among my interlocutors, he described how receiving money from the state was something he was not used to. The claim that the regime "would never give you money" was a boast, meaning that he and other Syrians and Palestinians were able to, or had to, manage by themselves in Syria, or at least through a network of family and contacts. They were used to being self-sufficient and therefore felt estranged from the welfare provided by the state. As Rami says, "this is not my money", and the money lacks "value" (*qimeh*).

This estrangement is compounded by bureaucracy that makes receiving welfare a sometimes complicated and protracted process. Rami's issue with re-registering at the Jobcenter, he complained, was not because he did not send the right paperwork in time, but because there was a problem with the type of ID that he provided. It is a good example of the kinds of inflexibility and bureaucratic circuitousness that is often the complaint of people forced to navigate bureaucracies, such as the experience of Sierra Leoneans in London who confront "bureaucratic protocols, indecipherable documents, abstract rules, and official forms of validation" (Jackson 2008, 65). As Rami put it succinctly later in the conversation, "you can't even go to the toilet without a piece of paper".

Rami's alienation from the money he was given expresses something I heard a number of times from friends. For some, this alienation produced a feeling of flippancy and insincerity whereby because it is not money you have earned, it is money that can be flitted away on non-essential things like buying cigarettes and alcohol. This was the position of Bassem, who I will discuss further below. He told me that he was content to spend the money he received from the Jobcenter on clothes, alcohol and having a good time because it was not money he had earned, but when he finds a job he would be much more careful. For others it produced the opposite effect, and money that had not been earned through work should be used carefully and on essential things, and the rest should be saved so that it could be used when needed, in case of emergencies, or to start a business venture. The same discomfort around receiving money from the state could lead people to take less than what they could. Hussein, for example, made a point of telling me that he would not take the full 700 euros provided by the Jobcenter for furnishing his new apartment because this would be "taking advantage".

Figure 5 - The Jobcenter in Dresden

This tension around receiving welfare from the state reflects Mauss's notion of "the gift". Mauss argued that a gift contains something of the self and is therefore inalienable, "to make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself" (Mauss 1990, 15) which creates an obligation for the receiver to reciprocate. Aid, welfare or being granted asylum can be conceptualised as a gift which places the receiver in a state of "moral subordination" until they have reciprocated the gift (Indra 1993; Vandevoordt 2017; Moulin 2012). Didier Fassin has described humanitarianism in terms of the gift, whereby "victims" are "those for whom the gift cannot imply a counter-gift, since it is assumed that they can only receive." (2007, 512) Awareness of the power relations intrinsic to such giving was the cause of the "gift taboo" in Greece, in which there was a wariness of any kind of offer of material assistance as impeding the formation of horizontal relations of solidarity. Rozakou explains, "Gifts are potentially dangerous, because they invoke the vicious circle of reciprocity, by definition an unreciprocated gift generates inequality and places the giver in a hierarchically higher position." (Rozakou 2016, 193)

The nature of receiving welfare as a gift that creates stigma and moral subordination is reflected in how my interlocutors would avoid referring to the Jobcenter in public. A group of friends from Dara'a would refer to it as *"Abu Jābir"* when they talked among themselves. When I asked them why, they said it was because it was not good for Germans to hear Arabs say "Jobcenter", which is the only word they would understand when they were talking in Arabic. In this respect, the Jobcenter was similar to *"hashish"*, which they referred to as *"aghrāḍ"* (things). An Iraqi friend also told me that he had heard the Jobcenter referred to as *"bayt ʿam"* (uncle's house), which for Syrians would invoke the Assad regime's infamous prisons in Syria. The term "Jobcenter" could also be useful short-hand to make fun of others. One evening while we were walking back to their apartment block, Akram and Hamid were doing caricatured impressions of regional Syrian accents in German, such as *Shawī,* a dialect of the countryside, or the distinctive accent of Latakiyya. In making fun of these accents, it is not a coincidence that the phrase they repeated each time was: *"Ich war beim Jobcenter Gestern"* (I was at the Jobcenter yesterday).

The result of the stigma associated with dependency on the Jobcenter was the valorisation of individuals who found work and became independent. Typically, these tended to be people who had left the language course prematurely - or after completing the obligatory B1 programme - and subsequently found often low-paid work with a German company, such as becoming a construction worker (*Bauarbeiter*), or else had found an opportunity in one of the new Arab shops and fast-food outlets. This was also possible for doctors from Syria, who were able to do a fast-track programme to gain accreditation to practise medicine in Germany. During a conversation with Suhail, who at the time was waiting for the opportunity to do the four-month B2 language programme, he spoke highly of those who had found work and contrasted their independence and maturity to himself,

> They want to help their parents, they want to marry, they want to live their lives. Not like the way we are living our lives, that you live with only a little money, and every day you go, you come, you go, you come. You hate yourself.

Similar to Rami above, Suhail bemoans the complexity and rigidity of bureaucracy in Germany which he "hates" and conveys as superfluous. In contrast, Suhail's friends who found employment, mainly people with low-income work and long hours, avoid the indignity of being unable to control their time and are able to fulfil the expectations of masculine maturity. They

can assume their responsibility to help their parents and they are able to marry. That said, Suhail and others who expressed the virtue of refugees who found work, would at other times describe the uncertainty and difficulty of what was often described as dead-end work. His comment should therefore be seen as reflecting his frustration at the stigma and indignity of dependency and negotiating with bureaucracy, but it did not change his desire to learn German in order to enter the necessary education and training to be able to find skilled work.

Receiving benefits entailed terms and conditions and with it particular controls and surveillance. Suhail referred to the way that claiming support often involves being summoned to meetings with a supervisor at the Jobcenter and the expectation of supplying paperwork. However, the control of movement and oversight from the state extended far beyond these meetings. Recipients were expected to attend the language courses that the Jobcenter pays for and failure to attend without a good reason could lead to having the stipend cut. There was also the condition that claimants ask permission from the Jobcenter if they want to leave Saxony, and if a supervisor discovered that someone claiming state support had left without permission, this would lead to a financial penalty. This was the case for Akram after a trip to Norway which he did not have permission for because he should have been attending the compulsory integration course. A few weeks later he submitted bank statements in order to claim a refund for the cost of furnishing his new apartment when his supervisor noticed that he had used his card abroad. The result of the infraction was a penalty of 150 euros, equivalent to over one third of his monthly stipend. In practice, such restrictions on movement were easy to avoid and many people I knew left Saxony for long periods at a time, making sure not to use their card. One Syrian man who Akram and I spoke to outside the Palestinian food shop on Ferdinandstrasse shortly after Akram discovered he had the fine, said that he regularly spends months with his mother and family in Sweden without ever being caught. However, he told us that he was always ready to return if he received an invitation for a meeting at the Jobcenter; it was therefore a circumscribed, tentative freedom of movement.

Dependency on the state could be described as emasculating as it undermines virtues of autonomy and self-sufficiency and the "provider" role. Suhail described how dependency denies the chance to fulfil male responsibilities, for example, such as being able to send money to parents in Syria. In fact, the way that dependency was experienced as emasculating was often invoked directly in terms such as "it makes me feel like I am not a man". There is evidence that discourses of the greater "suffering" of displaced men than women is a result of becoming dependent when there is an expectation of men to fulfil the role of "breadwinner" (Kabachnik

et al. 2013). Many of my friends, who were young and single and had lived with their families before leaving Syria, had never had this role. They were therefore differently placed to the experiences of older, married men who faced a loss of status, such as middle-class, middle-aged Bosnian men in the Netherlands (Jansen 2008) or married Somali men in Denmark (Kleist 2010). Nonetheless, they shared these expectations because of the gendered values and expectations they were brought up with. This has been described by Ghannam (2013) in Cairo, where she shows how boys are taught from a young age the virtue of hard work and responsibility to female kin, to the extent that boys who find work are taught to split their small earnings with female members of their family.

Omar left Syria when he was 17 where he lived with his parents and was never responsible for a home, or his family, but he too described his emasculation at being dependent on the Jobcenter. He described this distinction when we talked at the café where we would regularly meet one day in relation to his upbringing and the differential expectations of boys and girls. He explained, "I don't want money, or to get their letters, and have to see them, and to go there asking for money. We were not raised like this. Boys are taught from the beginning to work, to do things in the house. The girls study, and the boys go to the shop and bring things to the house." Omar invokes what Ghannam describes as the responsibility of boys to work and provide from an early age, contrasting his role in taking responsibility for going to the shop with his sisters who were busy studying.

At the same time, discourses about the Jobcenter could be highly variable as it was not only a site of restrictions and obligations associated with receiving the stipend, but was also responsible for providing what I described for some individuals in Chapter 1 as vital access to education and training. Nonetheless, for many of my friends dependency on the Jobcenter could be the site of frustration and humiliation (Zeno 2017) and a very common expression that was shared between my interlocutors was *"kus ikht il-Jobcenter!"* (Fuck the Jobcenter!) This same sense of frustration and shame could also be described and talked about in light-hearted and self-deprecatory ways. My friends could describe situations which manifested their lack of options and freedom to manoeuvre in a sexualised discourse. For instance, in the lead up to a meeting at the Jobcenter when someone had not taken the necessary steps that had been agreed, or had missed class a number of times, they might describe how the Jobcenter, or a supervisor at the Jobcenter, *"raḥ yanīkūnī"* (will fuck me). Akram would often talk about the penalty of 150 euros in these terms, deploying homo-erotic imagery to express his sense of powerlessness

(Hart 2008). Others, such as Jamil, a former teacher who was in his mid-thirties, described the Jobcenter as "mum and dad", expressing the way that it both supported and infantilised him.

What this shows is that dependency was often experienced as a source of frustration and humiliation for Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden. The stigma of the label of "refugee" could often be embodied in the web of controls and expectations associated with receiving welfare from the Jobcenter, and this stigma was experienced as a form of emasculation that offended attributes of autonomy and self-reliance (Rommel 2018). However, this was not simply a state of being for young Syrian and Palestinian male refugees, a feature of a "crisis of masculinity" facing men in displacement. The stigma of dependency prompted discourses in which my interlocutors sought to establish their dignity as masculine men and worthy citizens by distancing themselves from such dependency.

Dignity through Distancing Strategies

My interlocutors could grapple with the stigma of receiving benefits from the Jobcenter by distancing themselves from dependency through contrasting themselves with a so-called "abject Other". The creation of an "abject Other" against which to hierarchise has been explored in a number of different contexts among displaced and stigmatised communities. Ewing (2008), for example, shows how young Turkish-Germans seek to escape their stigmatisation in German society through differentiating themselves to the abject figure of the patriarchal Turkish man. Vandevoordt and Verschragen (2019) describe "boundary making" among Syrian refugees in Belgium, by which they displayed their individual and collective level of culture, education and work ethic in contrast to others. In Dresden, my friends would often distinguish themselves from the despised figure of a refugee man who was described as being content to be dependent on the Jobcenter, who did not aim for autonomy and independence, or to "become something" in Germany. A common way of talking about such men was that they were happy "to eat, sleep and drink". It is revealing that the other context in which this expression was often used was to describe life under the Assad regime where there was little freedom of speech and a highly circumscribed civil society.

The figure of the man who is content to be dependent can be understood as what Jensen describes for the *"skollie",* "poor, coloured male thugs" in Cape Town, who occupy "a central non-place around which political and everyday identity is structured" (Jensen 2008, 5). This despised, "abject Other" was a frequent point of reference against which my interlocutors

would contrast themselves as worthy and masculine men. Take, for instance, a conversation I had with Suhail one morning at his apartment over coffee. What prompted us to talk about the Jobcenter was its decision that Suhail would need to do the *Maßnahme*, a six-month programme which aimed to teach job-hunting skills, before he was able to do the B2 language course. I asked Suhail about my observation of the two sides to the Jobcenter, on the one hand enabling new opportunities, but on the other the cause of frustration because of the need to accept welfare and the control that comes with it. He agreed and explained that he would leave the Jobcenter as soon as he can. He told me, "*shukrān* (thank you), but I want to be in charge of my own life". He contrasted his attitude, his determination to be independent, with others who were content to accept support from the state. He explained,

> There are other people who are happy to live off the Jobcenter. They sit and have their monthly stipend *(rātib*). They can eat and drink, and that's it*,* they don't need anything else. Maybe they will work black on the side so they can earn more money. But they don't want to work formally because they will lose the money from the Jobcenter. What are you? A dog that eats and drinks, and that is enough?

One way that Suhail makes sense of his status as dependent on the Jobcenter is to assert his determination to become independent and be in charge of his own life. He contrasts himself and his attitude to men who are content "to sit and have their monthly *rātib*". This figure of the "abject Other" is someone who chooses his own dependency and does not seek to work and become an independent and autonomous man. Rather, this man is a "dog" (*kelb*), a term which in Arabic has the connotation of someone who is unclean and worthless. If he does work, he does so "black" so as to avoid losing his welfare support. For Suhail, "black work" was shorthand for bad character: dishonest, lazy and opportunistic.

For others, black work was seen in opposite terms, as a commitment to being autonomous and independent. However, this alternative way of thinking about black work also created space for the construction of the stigmatised figure of the refugee who is content to be dependent. Doing black work could be seen as a stage for acumen, skill and determination to work. This is similar to what I described as the important role of Rami's "black" business selling kitchens in Chapter 1. Akram, for instance, had worked black with Turkish handymen in a city in western Germany before he came to Dresden. He was not against working illegally in Dresden but he wanted to concentrate on learning German and there were not many

opportunities anyway which he put down to the small Turkish community. When I asked him if he agreed with the negative characterisation of men who work black, he replied indignantly: "Of course not! Whoever this person is he is talking rubbish." He contrasted the plucky individual who works black in order to earn extra money to send to his family in Syria, with the person who is content to live from the Jobcenter, who "sits at home with his wife and they don't do anything […] they get up and sit and live off money from the Jobcenter."

Akram describes a figure in very similar terms to Suhail, a man who is content to live from the Jobcenter. Yet in contrast to this figure, black work offers the opportunity to enact the masculine responsibility to support family at home. It is valorised by Akram as displaying the will to work and refusal to sit at home. What Suhail and Akram's comments do therefore is to implicitly distinguish themselves from the figure of the "abject Other" and in doing so assert their commitment and determination to be autonomous from the Jobcenter.

Comparing oneself to an "abject Other" as the means by which to assert determination to become independent of the Jobcenter is similar to a discourse among my interlocutors about being able to reciprocate the state in the future. As I described above, welfare can be characterised as a "gift" that debases the receiver until it is reciprocated. My friends would often tell me about their plans to return the amount the state had "invested" in them through work and paying taxes. This was the suggestion of Omar when we sat together at a small café in a village an hour north of Dresden after a trip to visit the Rakotzbrücke (Devil's Bridge). In this setting, which he characterised as "very German", Omar brought up his determination to pay off the money the state had spent on him. He tried to work out what this figure might be by the time he finishes his education and suggested the modest sum of six thousand euros, before revising it to twelve thousand. "It won't take me long before I have paid this off in taxes", he boasted. He told me resolutely, "I want to be in a position in which I have paid for myself." What Omar sought to do is discursively displace the present, a time of dependency and reliance on the state, to a future point when he is gainfully employed and paying taxes and therefore no longer indebted through the "gift" of welfare.

Omar's calculation of his capacity to repay his debts shares with what my interlocutors would often describe as Germany's (or Merkel's) "invitation" for Syrians to come because of its wish for a young, strong, and educated workforce. In this interpretation, my friends would boast that their permission to come to Germany was not a result of their victimhood but rather their ability to contribute to the national economy in the future after a period of investment in the present. Germany's opportunism could be described cynically, as with most discussion

about politics, but it was not meant as a form of censure. This shares with the currency of the neoliberal citizenship regime among my interlocutors that I described in Chapter 1, in which their capacity to belong in Germany was understood according to their productivity and contribution to the national economy. The discourse of their capacity to reciprocate contrasts to what Vandevoordt and Verschragen (2019a) describe as the perception among Syrians that the welfare they receive from the Belgian state is impossible to reciprocate in the future because of the difficulty of finding work, and therefore becomes an "unreciprocal gift" which takes on a "humanitarian logic" - receiving support that cannot be repaid. In Germany, there was not the same doubt about future employment for most people and my interlocutors would stress their capacity to re-pay the gift and therefore symbolically change the terms of their dependency. Rather than welfare as support which embodies their helplessness and neediness, it becomes a form of investment which is on the cusp of being repaid. Similar to the figure of the "abject Other", there is a process by which my interlocutors distance themselves from the dependency of welfare through a discursive shift towards the future when they are not dependent refugees but citizens who have re-paid their debt.

Not everyone agreed with this notion of reciprocity and the idea of state support as a "gift" that needs to be repaid. For others, the amount the state paid to refugees should be seen as receiving what they are owed. In this conception, the destruction of Syria was the responsibility of outsiders, and therefore Syrians, as innocent victims of a proxy war, are essentially owed this support from those who are involved. This came up in the conversation among the group of friends from Dara'a I discuss above who referred to the Jobcenter as *"Abu Jābir"*. One of the group told me that "the West", including Germany, held part of the responsibility for destruction in Syria and therefore the amount that the state spent on Syrians was essentially reclaiming some of the value of their home and everything else they had lost. His friends disagreed, but only insofar as the money they received was not from the government but taxes from ordinary people. According to this account, welfare was not a "gift" that debases Syrians and Palestinians as recipients, but rather represents compensation for the destruction of their property and homeland.

Such processes of distancing the self from dependency on welfare could extend to patterns of receiving welfare between married couples. The welfare state has been shown in places such as Argentina to have the effect of reproducing the bifurcation between "male independent workers" and "female dependent non-workers" by directing almost all their benefit programmes at women (Auyero 2012). This was not the case in Germany, where

benefits are available to men and women, but it could be the same in practice among married couples. In late 2017, Fadil had a full-time job alongside occasional part-time work which provided him a modest salary. However, he complained that he earned the same amount overall as when he was receiving support from the Jobcenter because although it would pay a stipend to his wife, Amira, it would no longer cover rent and other costs. He told me therefore that they planned to move to a new apartment and place the tenancy under Amira's name so that she would receive support to cover the apartment. This scheme, which was well-known among my friends, could often be criticised as opportunistic. What I want to draw attention to, however, is the way that this reveals the different implications and stigma of dependency between men and women. In the case of Fadil and Amira, while Fadil was determined to work and to be autonomous through his work, and therefore avoid receiving support from the state, this was very different for Amira, who did not seem to suffer the same stigma.

This section reveals how my interlocutors sought to distance themselves from the stigma of their status as dependent refugees to construct themselves as embodying masculine virtues of autonomy, hard work and independence, and as fulfilling expectations of the neoliberal citizenship regime - as contributors to Germany rather than takers. What these discourses do is to legitimise the present condition of stigma by drawing a direct link to a point of resolution. In the first case, this is through showing *discontent* with being dependent on welfare, and determination to be independent in contrast to an "abject Other" who is *content* to receive benefits. In the second case, this is through expressing a point in the future when the "gift" will be repaid. The third case makes welfare a form of compensation for the damage inflicted to Syria as the site of an international proxy war. The final case, where support is received in a wife's name only, displaces the stigma of dependency altogether. To this extent, my analysis shares with much recent literature on the stigma of refugeeness and the strategies of male refugees to position themselves as masculine and worthy men through seeking to distance themselves from dependency. I will now turn to explore instances when my interlocutors actually encounter representatives of the welfare state. In doing so, I show how receiving welfare could become the site of performances of masculine identity and claims to belong.

"They are smart, but we are smarter"

Attending meetings with a supervisor at the Jobcenter was a frequent and despised part of everyday life for all my interlocutors in the initial one or two years after being granted refugee status. In many respects these encounters can be seen as manifesting through body language and behaviour what they describe as the tensions of dependency. Friends who I knew as self-confident could become meek and ill-at-ease with themselves when they went to the Jobcenter. This was the case for Omar when I joined him for a meeting at the Jobcenter one day and met him outside smoking a cigarette. He told me, "I hate the Jobcenter. They send you a letter and you have to come!" and, "when I come here, I feel like I am not a man." The supervisor had organised the meeting in order to find out whether Omar had begun school and during the meeting in her office on the fourth floor of the Jobcenter, Omar was quiet and spoke in stuttering German. In ordinary life, Omar is quick-witted and funny and he would often amuse the whole of our language class with ironic observations, making fun of himself and others. Reflecting on the meeting after we finished and when we started to walk back to the town centre, he explained that he felt anxious in the meeting. He reasoned, the "Jobcenter is the state (*ildowla*), and I am just disposable (*ghīyār*)", reflecting his sense of powerlessness and insignificance.

Encountering the Jobcenter could turn Omar from a dignified man who is worthy of investing in, to someone who feels like he is "not a man". I was surprised, therefore, that a short time after the meeting the encounter suddenly took on quite different terms. Rather than facing the supervisor anxiously and clumsily, Omar constructed an image of himself as a strategist who kept his cards close to his chest. He explained to me how shrewd he had been in the meeting when the supervisor had asked if the school he had joined had told him about the opportunity to apply for extra funding from the Jobcenter. He had mumbled awkwardly that he hadn't received any information yet when in fact, he explained to me now, he had been told and he had the paperwork at home, but he was choosing to wait. Omar had recently started a three year programme to complete the *Abitur* and he was still receiving the monthly stipend from the Jobcenter and having his rent paid. The following month, however, he would need to rely on the more modest student loan from BAföG and it would not cover all his costs. He explained that if he had asked about the extra funding in the meeting she would have turned him down because he is still in receipt of support from the Jobcenter. "She would say: what do you want the money for?" However, and he displayed a look of satisfaction at his cleverness,

they will agree when he returns in a few months and he is able to show them how much he is receiving from BAföG, and how much his rent costs. Omar's encounter, which embodied his status as a welfare recipient and the kinds of control and conditions this entails, became the site of his agency. His silence was a strategy, and his strategy a process of risk-taking. In this example, it is in the moment of being a claimant or recipient that provides the site of a performance and narrative that exemplifies his agency.

Negotiating what you are owed was a common way that people talked about encounters with the Jobcenter. This could apply to accessing benefits and welfare, as in the case of Omar, but it could also apply to getting permission to join language classes. When I saw Khalid at his apartment one afternoon, he told me how he was able to get access to the B2 language course and avoid the dreaded *Maßnahme.* He narrated to me the conversation with his supervisor, who he tended to characterise as stern and unfriendly, which I noted down as the following:

> Supervisor: Hello. Did you pass B1?
> Khalid: Yes, but not by much.
> S: Hmm, you should do the *Maßnahme*.
> K: I would like to do B2.
> S: Why?
> K: I want to do an *Ausbildung*.
> S: You don't need B2 for an *Ausbildung.*
> K: Yes, you do for IT.
> S: Ah, yes. But why don't you do the *Maßnahme* to become stronger at the language?
> K: I would rather do B2. I think it will be better.
> S: OK, sign here.
> K: No, I won't sign.
> S: It is for the B2 course!
> K: Ah, ok!

In his account, Khalid demonstrated his capacity to stand up for himself with his supervisor. He martialled his knowledge and made the case in German for doing the B2 language course, and even showed his refusal to sign when he thinks he is being tricked into joining the *Maßnahme*. This exchange is mundane and appears to show how he and his supervisor quickly

came to an agreement about the path ahead, but the fact that Khalid told me the exchange in full shows the significance he accords to his part and how well he played it. Getting support from the Jobcenter, in this case funding for the B2 language course, becomes something noteworthy and something to share with others. An otherwise unexceptional exchange is the site for displaying the effective way he negotiated what he wants in the conditions of dependency.

What creates space for the narrative of agency in negotiating with the Jobcenter is the way that accessing benefits is not straightforward. Bureaucracies such as the Jobcenter can be experienced as complex, opaque and arbitrary (Herzfeld 1993), and they can produce uncertainty for users (Auyero 2012; Cabot 2013). In contrast to Weber's conception of bureaucracies as rational systems, scholars have shown how they are shaped by emotional registers (Lipsky 2010). In fact, the way in which bureaucracies produce uncertainty and unpredictability has been increasingly seen as part and parcel of government policy, in which restrictive official rules alongside unofficial practices produce legally-tenuous and therefore exploitable populations of workers who will work for little and will make no claims to state support (Biehl 2016; Tuckett 2015). The unpredictability of bureaucracies has been shown as part of a process of producing "political subordination" among the poor (Auyero 2012).

My friends shared a sense of the Jobcenter as opaque and unpredictable. There were many instances when they described their perception that a decision by the Jobcenter was not logical or predictable and had been conditioned by the particular feelings of the staff member – whether positive or negative. Omar, for example, described this feeling when he summed-up encounters with the Jobcenter for Syrian refugees with the expression *"ḥasab il-muwaẓaf"* (it depends on the supervisor): decisions made by the Jobcenter are arbitrary and may or may not go the way you want them to. It was common for my interlocutors to explain the result of a particular encounter according to whether the person "likes" him or not. For instance, when Suhail was forced to do the *Maßnahme*, he was certain this represented the biased decision of his supervisor rather than Jobcenter policy for someone in his circumstances, and subsequently spent several weeks launching appeals and official complaints, including soliciting help from the *Auslanderrat* (Foreigners Advice Centre). What these examples show is the widespread sense that bureaucracy was determined by an affective economy. But while this was often invoked to explain why a decision went one way or another, it also opened up a space in which to shape results. The Jobcenter was not a place of rules and procedures but a site to be negotiated and a system to play.

This is apparent in another instance in which encountering the Jobcenter became the site for displaying agency. Bassem is from eastern Syria and is in his early twenties and looked after his younger brother and sister in Dresden. He also shared the view that the Jobcenter and other institutions were unpredictable, where decisions were made based on the mood of the bureaucrat. For instance, he explained to me one day that he was sure a woman at the *Auslanderbehörde* (Foreigners Office) in Dresden was trying to get him deported to Syria. His newly-issued German passport had contained errors and the woman had instructed him to go to the Syrian embassy in Berlin to address the problem. However, he told me correctly, it is forbidden by Germany for Syrian refugees to go to the embassy. He explained pithily: "I will not be Syrian when I enter the embassy, and I will not be German when I come back out". For Bassem, it was evidence that the woman was determined for him to make a mistake and lose his right to be in Germany. One afternoon, I met Bassem by chance at the Jobcenter when he was standing in a long queue to speak to reception while I was sitting in the waiting room with a friend. He told me he was coming every day to the Jobcenter in order to try to get the money he was owed, not only for him, but also his younger brother and sister. When it was finally his turn to speak to the reception, he asked them politely about the payment and they told him that it would be paid at the end of the month. He told me it was the same thing they had told him the day before. I asked him why he came again if they told him yesterday they would pay the money at the end of the month. He explained that if he doesn't come every day, they will think he is working illegally because he wouldn't have enough money to survive and then they would not pay him the stipend. "Did they tell you this?" I asked, bewildered. "No, but this is what they are thinking", he replied confidently. "They are smart" he said, "but we are smarter" (*Humeh zaki bas iḥna zakī akta*). By coming to the reception at the Jobcenter every day, he was able to boast about outmanoeuvring the Jobcenter who would find a reason not to pay the stipend that he had a right to.

In both Omar and Bassem's cases, they situate agency in the process of claiming and negotiating support from the Jobcenter. Claims to institutions could also extend beyond getting access to what you are owed towards a claim for the right to live a good and dignified life. This was the case when Khalid sought to negotiate with the Jobcenter his right to live alone. In general, once a place to live had been found and the Jobcenter had agreed to cover the rent, it was difficult to leave without good reason, such as the arrival of family after reunification, or moving to a different area of Germany because of study or work. What the issue of housing raises therefore is the question of freedom of movement and how being a refugee is to give up

the chance to live where you want to live and how you want to live. Khalid was determined to leave the apartment he shared with his housemate, Tariq, because they often fell out and he was unable to concentrate on studying in their small living space and he wanted the independence and privacy that came from living alone. However, their rent was paid by the Jobcenter and this included a number of terms and conditions; leaving because they were falling out was not a sufficient reason for the Jobcenter to agree to Khalid moving to a new apartment. Instead, Khalid's supervisor advised him to split the apartment between the living room and bedroom in order not to spend so much time with Tariq. Even when their two year contract with the housing provider Vonovia ended, Khalid was unable to leave. However, he told me with satisfaction that he had a plan. According to the rules, one of them needed to leave Dresden if they wanted to move out. If he moved to Berlin for a month and slept at friends' apartments, when he returned to Dresden he could go to the Jobcenter and ask for a new apartment - thereby getting around their restrictions and negotiating his right to live alone. In similar terms to Bassem, he told me that "the Jobcenter is smart, but we are smarter".

In the end, Tariq left Dresden for another city and Khalid was able to leave the apartment. However, the plan Khalid shared with me and other friends turned a situation that displayed his dependency on the Jobcenter and his inability to choose where to live, into a site of agency. In his example, and the examples of Bassem and Omar, agency emerges from the practice of waiting. In Omar's case, he waits to illustrate his need; in Bassem's case he waits in line every day at the Jobcenter, and in Khalid's case, he plots to wait in Berlin until he can claim the right to live alone. As scholars have shown, waiting can be the expression of powerlessness. Andersson (2014) has shown how forcing African migrants to wait is part of a European border control strategy in the Strait of Gibraltar in what he describes as "the active usurpation of time". Auyero (2012) describes the often long, uncertain and stressful waiting of mainly female claimants at welfare offices in Buenos Aires. For these "waiters", accessing welfare is a site of passivity, and their agency is "minimal to non-existent". In the accounts of my interlocutors, however, such waiting was represented as a site of agency. It was a strategy and a choice forced by the refusal, or anticipated refusal, of the Jobcenter to provide what they have the right to. Waiting was not the passivity of seeing what the state provides, or the decision of a border official, it was a process of taking steps to ensure you are given what you are owed. In this process, they describe their cleverness and cunning and their agency in the encounter. This does not change the power differential between them and the state, but such powerlessness

and dependency is not seen as an expression of the emasculation of being dependent on the state but becomes the setting for narratives that foreground dignity.

This brings to mind the "trickster" masculinity displayed by male sex-workers in the Dominican Republic. Padilla (2004) describes the way that such sex workers turn what is a stigmatising practice into a configuration of local masculinity, namely *"tiguero"* masculinity. This is a masculine identity which includes the capacity "to resolve, in an acceptable way, the dilemmas which have to be faced as a consequence of a tough environment", relying on "verbal skills and a chameleon-like ability to convince" (135). Through hiding their sex work, these men are able to enact such notions of duplicity. Similarly, Purser (2009) shows how male Mexican workers in the US frame seeking work on the street, the only option available to them as illegal migrants, as a choice which displays masculine dignity through an emphasis on skills, hard-work and autonomy, reflecting what Bourdieu describes as "making a virtue of necessity" (Bourdieu 1977, 46 in Purser 2009). In the context of engaging the Jobcenter, Omar and Bassem similarly turn a stigmatising dimension of displacement - receiving support from the Jobcenter - into a site of masculine virtue as they display their capacity for resilience, self-control and strategy. But this is not the only result of encountering the Jobcenter. In the context of Dresden, encounters with bureaucracy are the site not only for the display of masculine virtues, but also the setting by which to enact citizenship.

I described above discourses of repayment of the "gift" through paying taxes in the future that displaces the subordinate position as refugees in the present. The encounters of Omar, Bassem and Khalid at the Jobcenter also problematise access to welfare and support as a "gift" which they should be grateful to receive. This is not through repayment of the gift, but rather turning the "gift" into a right. To this extent, their actions are comparable to the kinds of agency associated with migrants who conduct political action and invoke a discourse of human rights to problematise refugee identity as a form of guest-ness that generates moral subordination. This has been the main site in which scholars have situated migrants' agency in what Isin (2008) has termed "acts of citizenship". A good example of this is Syrian asylum seekers in Athens who in 2014 arranged a sit-in to protest against being prevented from leaving Greece (Ingvars & Gislason 2018). Similarly, Moulin's account of the impact of Palestinian refugees' protests in Brazil on the conceptualisation of state support and hospitality is insightful,

> by conditioning the acceptance of protection, by demanding a condition of equality that is denied in the logic of gift giving […] they pose the dilemma of living as a refugee, and the consequences that stem from it, as one that involves duties and rights. Therefore, they call for dialogue and clear rules of procedure: they ask to know what theirs is by right and what is not. (2012, 61)

Negotiating with the Jobcenter involves a similar disruption of the "logic" of gift exchange. In their accounts of outsmarting the Jobcenter, Bassem, Omar and Khalid don't situate welfare as a gift to wait patiently to be given and to be grateful for, but rather turn it into rights they are owed, which they need to be clever, bold and determined to receive. If citizenship is about membership of society, this includes the capacity to claim the rights of such membership, "the right to have rights" (DeGooyer et al. 2018). In this process of turning the unwanted necessity of receiving benefits from the state into a stage for making claims and asserting the right to claim and guarantee such support from the state, refugees enact citizenship.

Heath Cabot writes in the context of what she argues is the agency of clients and lawyers in making asylum applications in Athens that she expands the otherwise narrow attention of literature that "locates the agency of migrants and asylum seekers largely in the realm of political action" (2013, 453). By exploring Syrian and Palestinian men's capacity "to wait", and how this was boasted as shaping encounters with the Jobcenter, I similarly show how negotiation of rights in institutional settings could be a source of agency in processes of not only making claims to welfare as rights, but also to making claims to live a good life, as in Khalid's plan to temporarily move to Berlin in order to be able to live alone in Dresden. Alongside processes by which my interlocutors sought in everyday life to distance themselves from the stigmatising effects of being dependent on the Jobcenter, getting access to state support could become the stage, at least sometimes, for a similar performance, entailing masculine virtues in navigating the encounter and asserting claims to citizenship.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the lived experience of welfare and dependency among Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden. In doing so, it has sought to expand on work that has explored the ways that displaced men engage with the stigma of "refugeeness", often through processes of distancing themselves from dependency and its association with neediness and victimhood. My

interlocutors articulated the stigma of receiving welfare as emasculating, infantilising and denying their right to claim to be autonomous and economically productive members of society. In similar terms to what scholars have described elsewhere, they sought to distance themselves from association with dependency through the construction of an "abject Other", a discourse of reciprocity, of receiving compensation, and, in some cases, displacing dependency on to a wife. However, in their experiences of encountering the Jobcenter there emerges a more complex picture. In the push and pull of negotiating access to benefits and the perceived uncertainty and flexibility of bureaucracy in Germany, welfare did not seem very much like a gift at all. Waiting, which in many respects laid bare the limited power and dependency of Syrian and Palestinian men, could become the site for narratives and performances of a masculine agency that sought to turn welfare from a "gift" that excludes, to a source of making claims to citizenship. What was often seen as a source of stigma could, in the particular context of bureaucracy in Germany and their status as displaced men, become invested with a very different meaning.

Chapter 3
The Virtue of Being Unintegrated

Khalid and I were in the living room of Samira and Talal, a young, married couple. Khalid was interested in marriage and Samira was keen to help him, a role that might ordinarily be assumed by Khalid's mother or sister. She began to list candidates she had in mind from her network of young Arab women in Dresden. The first candidate, she said, was "sweet" (naʿmeh), *"white"* (abyaḍ), *"but a bit large"* (smīneh). *Khalid asked: "Has she integrated* (indamjet), *or not yet integrated* (lisa ma-ndamjet)*?" Samira laughed and replied, "*la, la*, she hasn't integrated yet". Khalid asked, "does she wear hijab?" "Yes". She said she would show him another woman. The next candidate was less promising: "She is 26", a few years older than Khalid, which prompted him to say "no" immediately. "And she is really, really integrated", she said. "She doesn't wear hijab!"*

This short vignette introduces Khalid's anxieties about changing gender norms in Germany. Gender relations in the context of displacement have been shown as a site that can be profoundly unsettling for men and women as roles may change while expectations remain similar (Kabatchnik et al. 2013). This unsettlement can often be experienced particularly by men, with women shown in a number of contexts as better able to adjust to new norms (McSpadden & Moussa 1993). While there is evidence of men's adjustment and the taking on of new roles and responsibilities inside and outside the home in migration contexts (Jansen 2008) in what has been termed a "new refugee masculinity" (Ingvars & Gislason 2018), work has tended to show men's struggle to match gendered expectations, such as fulfilling the role of breadwinner and provider (Donaldson & Howson 2009). Scholars have described the

"crisis" and "trauma" that can accompany the challenge to adjust in displacement and how this can result in divorce (Pasura 2008) and a sense of the breakdown of moral order (Turner 2000). At the same time, in the context of the stigma of refugee identity and the challenge of living with dignity in displacement, gender norms and relations can be a space in which men seek to assert power, dominance and authority. Relations in the home have been shown as sites in which men engage in "patriarchal restoration", invoking *naturalised* forms of male dominance and roles, such as denying the appropriateness or right of women to work (Kleist 2010; Suerbaum 2016; Hansen 2008).

Khalid's distinction between "integrated" (unmarriageable) and "not yet integrated" (marriageable) women could be read as a reflection of such a process of masculinisation; in the context of Germany, Khalid seeks to assert the authority he lacks in everyday life through finding an "unintegrated" Arab woman. However, this reading of Khalid's conversation and similar discourses among Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden is limited. While I argue that such gender discourses do reflect a process of "masculinising", this is not the result of a restoration of patriarchal norms in response to a crisis of masculinity. For one thing, unlike contexts in which often older, middle-class men do suffer a profound loss of status, this was very different for young male migrants to Germany who, as I showed in Chapter 1, could often see migration within a prism of masculine self-realisation. Understanding the nature of these gender discourses requires situating them in the context of Germany. Specifically, such gender discourses for my male interlocutors were deeply connected to the "integration imperative" (Bojadzijev 2008, 228 rf. Scheibelhofer 2012) and gender norms as the site of inclusion and exclusion in Germany.

There has been the emergence of a public discourse across Europe in recent decades which situates the figure of the "patriarchal migrant Muslim man" in opposition to an image of the national self that is centred on gender equality (Scheibelhofer 2012). One influential account of gender norms as terms of inclusion/exclusion in European societies is Katherine Ewing's study of the "fantasy" of the patriarchal Turkish man as the "Other" of the German national imaginary (2008). The result has been the emergence of policies that promote the "emancipation" of Muslim women and challenge the presumed patriarchal tendencies of men, such as restrictions on marriage migration (Charsley & Liversage 2015), compulsory civic integration programmes (Heinemann 2016), as well as the role of actors such as social workers (Ong 2003). Refugees in Germany therefore confront gender relations as key terms by which they imagine, articulate and make sense of their inclusion and exclusion in society. While

literature has explored the way such policies reflect the aims of changing migration regimes in the West (Scheibelhofer 2012), new processes of identity formation (Foerster 2014), and the emergence of the far-right (Fekete 2006), there has been less attention to the lived experience, responses and ramifications of these policies on the people they target.

Among my interlocutors in Dresden, the integration imperative was often the context for discourses about gender relations. Resisting the imperative to integrate could assert dignity through the refusal to be acted upon by the state's programme to forge particular types of citizens and therefore the site of virtues of autonomy and authenticity. Often what seemed to matter was not the extent to which one fulfils or embodies a particular notion of proper Arab, Muslim gender norms, but the extent to which one is seen to be willing to assimilate and adopt perceived European social and cultural norms. Seeming to adopt such norms could lead to rebuke as someone who has "integrated" and does not "think for himself". Rather than seeing discourses of conservative gender norms as only or primarily about patriarchal restoration, it should be seen as conditioned by responses to policies of integration.

At the same time, precisely because gender discourses were a response to an integration imperative, they were liable to change and vary. Scholars have tended to show how displaced men either adjust or do not adjust to changing gender norms in western contexts. In Dresden, this was not so clear-cut. Friends who in the context of integration classes could articulate rigid and intractable differences in gender norms between Europeans and Arabs, could in other instances criticise "old-fashioned" views as "out-of-place" and express the virtue of being "open-minded". If in some instances discourses of conservative gender norms communicated an individual's autonomy and refusal to fill the slot of an "integrated" man, in other instances accepting or championing such gender norms in Germany communicated the capacity to navigate the new environment, to think critically, to be modern, and to belong.

Patriarchal Restoration?

Displacement can result in the profound unsettling of men and women's pre-migration roles. For men, this often relates to the way they struggle to find work to be able to maintain a home and therefore fail to fulfil the status of provider or breadwinner, including, in some contexts, becoming dependent on the income of their wives (Gallo 2006; Pasura 2008). In addition to being unable to fulfil the masculine slot, displaced men can migrate to societies where there is much greater emphasis on gender equality in terms of access to work, legal rights, such as the

right to divorce and custody of children, and the expectation of women to enter the workplace, including policies that actively promote women's employment. Facing such circumstances can lead to perceptions that western societies are "misandristic", as in the case of asylum seekers in the UK (Griffiths 2015), and that they have migrated to a "women's land", as in the case of Somali migrants to Denmark (Kleist 2010). The difficulty of fulfilling expectations of manhood in the context of displacement has led to the notion of a "crisis of masculinity". In the case of internally-displaced Georgians, Kabachnik et al. (2013) have coined the term "traumatic masculinities" to capture the "social spaces of crises and trauma that initiate and sustain the redefinition of gendered power relations of displaced men and women" (774). Suerbaum has noted the following anxieties about gender relations in Europe among would-be Syrian migrant men in Egypt, some of which are familiar from my conversations with Syrian and Palestinian interlocutors in Dresden:

> Would the child be taken away by the state authorities if it was beaten once? How much parental authority was acceptable? Does the voice and signature of a woman as wife and mother count as much or more than the husband's or father's? Can a woman decide family-related issues on her own without consulting her husband? Can she travel on her own? (2017, 12)

The consequence of the changing circumstances can be the perception of the breakdown of morality among men and women in the host society. In the context of Burundian refugees in Lukole camp in Tanzania where UNHCR actively implemented policies of gender equality in the late 1990s, Turner noted people's impressions that "women were becoming prostitutes", "men were polygamists" and "women no longer respected their husbands" (2000, 8).

In Dresden, there was a similar discourse of a "breakdown" of gender relations, in particular that Arab women could have loose morals, become "arrogant", or "crazy". For example, Hisham, a Syrian man in his mid-twenties, was involved in supporting a Syrian friend in a legal case to get custodianship of his children from his wife. His friend's wife, he told me, had tried to set his friend up by calling the police and claiming that he had locked the children in their bedroom and left the house with the key. He told me that Arab women in Germany go "crazy" and he would not marry a woman here for this reason. What accounts such as these share is the apparent changes in gender norms in the context of Germany, where men saw the

authority they expected to have in Syria migrate to women, although work has shown how such authority in Arab societies is itself often conditional and negotiated (Ghannam 2013).

At the same time, however, gender relations can be the site in which men seek to re-assert their status in the context of displacement. This can involve the process of constructing the figure of a static, "traditional" woman against which men "masculinise". Suerbaum (2018) describes this for her Syrian male interlocutors in Cairo as the process by which they "unbecome" refugees by ignoring the ways that Syrian women are active in business and worked before migrating from Syria in order to naturalise men as responsible for earning money and women as dependent. This has also been shown in the case of Somalis who return to Somaliland, where men look for a "traditional Somali woman". Hansen shows how men found gender relations in the diaspora unsettling and problematic and his interlocutors complain of their wives being "defiled by Western ways and modern thinking about individuality, equality and rights" (2008, 1119). In this insightful analysis, the homeland becomes a figurative virgin to be penetrated by diasporic Somalis. In doing so, Somali men "take on the role of the traditional Somali man who has been lost in the civil war and life in exile, and thereby reconstruct a hegemonic masculine identity in a transnational context." (1121)

I noted something similar among some of my interlocutors who would talk at length about women who have "integrated" and look for a woman who is "authentic" (*aṣly*). This reflects the discourse of Akram when I joined him on a trip to Norway to meet a Syrian woman. Akram, who is in his early twenties, emphasised the conservative nature of his family and hometown and would tell me proudly how his younger sister never left their home "more than one metre". In a similar way to a number of my interlocutors, he described how Syrian women in Germany have "integrated". During one evening at his apartment, Akram contrasted a woman he knew in Turkey to Syrian women in Europe. He told me the woman "is not like the girls you see here in Germany. She is not a prostitute (*sharamuṭa*). She is polite (*muḥtaram*) and sweet (*ḥilweh*)." Akram sought to marry a woman who was "unintegrated" and in early 2017 he and I travelled to Norway for him to meet a woman he met online. The woman, who I will call Aisha, was 17 and lived in a small town about an hour from Oslo with her family.

I was struck by Akram's comments as we arrived by bus from the airport in Oslo to a city near where she lived. He made a series of comparisons between the quality of the built environment of the city and Dresden. He pointed to potholes in the road filled with water from the melting snow and said that in Germany it would not be like this. He made comments about

the dirtiness of the streets and pavements and he contrasted the time we needed to wait for the bus to arrive with the regularity and efficiency of public transport in Dresden. He also drew attention to the fact that Dresden has a train, tram and bus service to get around the city, while this town only had a bus. He drew a distinction between the town and Dresden's modernity, size and cleanliness. As we arrived at the woman's town, he pointed to an industrial area with large factories close to the train tracks and said she probably lives in this area and laughed. When we met again later in the afternoon after he had spent time with Aisha and her mother, he described in detail how the area where she lives is an Arab enclave with rundown housing and few Norwegian people. He said the shop where they had arranged to meet felt like being in Syria. While he was there, he explained to me how he had intervened in the shopping of a woman,

> I was next to a woman. She was looking at something. I said, 'this has pork.'
> She said, 'are you Arab?'
> I said, 'yes.'
> She was surprised, 'do you eat pork?'
> I replied, 'No, I don't eat pork'. I told her, 'Return it. I am living in Germany, but I came for a trip.'

In this quote, Akram fashions himself into an accomplished migrant bringing knowledge to a "backward" homeland in similar terms to Hansen's interlocutors returning to Somaliland. Akram described with satisfaction how Aisha embodied a traditional Arab woman who lived a very cloistered life as a result of her conservative father. She and her mother hardly left the confines of her home, the school and the local shop, he told me, evidenced by the fact that they did not know the direction to the train station. When Akram talked about a future marriage, he described a strict delineation of gender roles, imagining Aisha as a diligent, nurturing, stay-at-home wife who he would provide for as breadwinner and head of a single-income home. He explained that he would not want his future wife to work in Germany, even though in Syria this would not be a problem. In Syria, he said, "there is Islam", but in Germany his wife could be assaulted in the workplace for wearing hijab, therefore invoking the far-right to bolster his role in Germany as breadwinner and his future wife as dependent. When I asked Akram if Aisha is likely to fulfil the role he imagines, he replied, "she is obliged to".

The construction of a "traditional" Syrian woman required glossing over many aspects of Aisha's circumstances and personal history. Regardless of the circumstances in Aisha's town, there was a general consensus that refugees in Norway have a better deal than in Germany – a higher stipend and a shorter time to wait for permanent residency. In fact, in other conversations, Akram talked about his intention to move to Norway one day to join Aisha because of the higher wages and better opportunities. Contrasting Dresden with her town was therefore at odds with the perception of Akram, and others more generally, of Norway as a desirable place to live and work. On top of this his construct doesn't take account of the fact that Aisha attends school, is learning Norwegian and lived in Turkey for years before migrating, not to mention that they had conducted a relationship online. As in the cases described by Suerbaum (2018) and Hansen (2008), the traditional Syrian woman figure is a construct that doesn't take account of processes of change. Furthermore, the presentation of himself as a sage, accomplished migrant who intervenes in the shopping of an elderly woman to offer moral guidance is at odds with the uncertainty of his circumstances. By his own reckoning, it would be a number of years before he was ready to marry, when he hoped to have graduated from his technical education that he would begin the following year and found a job.

This would seem therefore to correspond to what Kandiyoti (1988) has termed "patriarchal restoration" that accompanies the unsettling of gender roles in displacement. However, articulating a discourse of hegemonic masculinity in order to "masculinise" in the sphere of the family as the terms by which to grapple with the loss of male authority in Germany only goes so far as an explanation. Akram, Khalid and others did express their anxieties about changing gender relations in the context of Germany, evidenced in the way they talked at length about women who "integrate" and the impact on married couples of the welfare state. Couples breaking-up and occasional accounts in the news of Arab refugee men attacking their wives were situated in the struggle of men and women to adjust to conditions in Germany. Yet, in contrast to Syrians in Egypt (Suerbaum 2018), or Somalis in the UK (Hansen 2008) or Denmark (Kleist 2010), Akram and others could see migration to Germany as a process of self-realisation. They did not experience a *loss* of status which needed to be compensated for, but in many cases anticipated their futures in Germany as "engineers". In other words, Akram and others could share conviction that they would one day fulfil the masculine ideal of the male breadwinner. In addition, describing women as "integrated" or "unintegrated" certainly conveyed anxieties and the intention to fulfil a particular ideal in future married life, but this is quite distinct from the kinds of "naturalised" patriarchy of migrant men in other contexts. In

fact, it could be the opposite. Rather than "naturalise" women's states, they discursively situated the vast majority of migrant Arab women in Germany and Europe within profound processes of change. If it is limited to see this as "patriarchal restoration", how might we situate discourses and ethics of women's "integration"?

The Imperative to Integrate

"Integration" in western societies is a contested concept which has several meanings. One helpful interpretation is that it "denotes what it takes for immigrants and refugees, and their descendants, to become proper members of a given society." (Olwig 2013, 8) While most social scientific literature focusses on structural barriers to "integration", public and political discourse tends to focus on "culture" (Ewing 2013, 19; Charsley & Spencer 2019). In the last few decades, women's rights and gender issues have emerged as central terms by which to judge "integration" in Europe, where gender equality has become essential to the self-identity of the nation in opposition to the migrant "Other" (Rostock & Berghahn 2008; Heinemann 2017). As Kofman et al. have written for a number of European societies, "Gender and sexuality are at the centre of debates to enforce integration, if not assimilation" (2013, 77). In Germany, concern for the rights of Muslim women has been reflected since 2001 in the "moral panic" over what Mandel describes as the "overdetermined symbols" of honour killings, coerced marriage, patriarchal violence and the wearing of the headscarf (2008, 11).

This shift in discourse has been situated in the need to justify and implement new forms of immigration control, tied up with processes of nation-state formation and national identity. In the context of Austria, Scheibelhofer writes that the "negative effects on migrant men as well as women can thus be introduced in the name of defending human rights." (2012, 328) In Germany, Foerster (2015) points to the shift after re-unification and the recognition of Germany "as a nation of immigration". The result of which has been a commitment to move beyond a traditional ethno-centred conception of nationality, "towards commitment to progressive ideals, cosmopolitanism, gender equality, and a foundation in a particular set of values grounded in Christian ethics" (54). She cites, for instance, the 2007 *Nationaler Integration Plan* (NIP) which outlines the responsibilities of migrants who settle in Germany to integrate according to a "very specific gendered prescription" and "utilizes the trope of imprisoned and imperiled womanhood to create the symbolic boundaries necessary to mark both inclusion and exclusion […]" (67). Other scholars have pointed to the consequences of

the "War on Terror" from the early 2000s and the re-alignment of the right, in which "state power… [has] put into place legal and administrative structures that discriminate against Muslims" and are seen as a "corrective to policies on the left that have turned a blind eye to patriarchal customs" (Fekete 2006, 2). Policies include restrictions on female marriage migrants who are seen by the state as vulnerable to abuse, less likely to learn the language and who perpetuate across generations patriarchal norms in their assumed roles as primary carers of children. In Germany this led to changes to the law in the 2004 Immigration Act which raised the age of marriage and introduced pre-screening tests for marriage migrants, which was understood to better provide "the opportunity to resist the influence of parental authority and other familial traditions" (Kofman et al. 2015, 83). In addition to restricting marriage migration, there has been the introduction of civic integration courses and tests in a number of European states, as reflected in the 2004 European Council statement of common principles for immigrant integration. Despite some variation in models, there has been continuity across Europe in implementing steps for civic integration. In Germany, this found its most extreme expression in the "Muslim test", a naturalisation test introduced by the Land government of Baden-Württemberg in 2006, where "all questions are formulated in terms of a binary opposition between liberal democracy and a certain idea of Islam, as prescribing or condoning arranged marriage, patriarchy, homophobia, veiling and terrorism" (Joppke 2007, 15).

My interlocutors experienced such gender discourses as the site of exclusion and inclusion in manifold ways. For those who followed political discourse in Germany, there was exposure to anxieties about male migrants among mainstream parties, especially after the attacks by predominantly North African asylum seekers in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015-16. Such a discourse was abundantly clear in campaign posters for the 2017 federal elections, where the majority of the far-right AfD's posters invoked the threat of non-European gender norms, such as one poster that showed women in bikinis on the beach. The poster read: "Burkas? We are staying in our bikinis" (see Figure 7 on p. 107). Similar themes have been shown for other parties, including posters for the CDU during the 2016 Berlin electoral campaign following the attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve (Borneman & Ghassem-Fachandi 2017, 130). The clearest encounter with these gender expectations was in the integration programme. As other scholars have noted, the integration course, a compulsory language programme up to B1 of the Common European Framework, can be understood as a process of acculturation to produce desirable citizens. Heinemann, who studied the integration programme in Germany and Austria, writes,

> [the] courses aim at conveying societal rules and the imagined values of the dominant society. The state offers courses with the assumption that subjects with a non-European citizenship, and even more so acutely when they are from so-called Muslim countries, do not share the same values as German and Austrian citizens. (Heinemann 2017, 178)

Gender discourses as the site of integration were explicit in the orienteering course, a compulsory three-week programme which introduces German politics, history and society. The final week of the three-week course consists of discussions about society, with particular attention to the roles of men and women, and gender equality. Class discussions included the role of nursery schools, the nature of what constitutes "family", including so-called "patchwork families" (see Figure 6), homosexual couples, and dating and marriage. The issue of women's rights were a key part of the discussions. At one point, after a tempestuous discussion about the rights of Muslim men to marry from another religion but women who cannot, the teacher, Lars, told the class, "This word, *Gleichberechtigunge* (equal rights), is for you a mantra. There is nothing else. This is the hardest for Muslim people." The concern for gender relations was further reflected in the 333 questions that are available for the 33 questions of the orienteering course exam. This included, for example, the following question (no. 267) about the rights of an adult woman to choose her own partner which reflects anxieties about the attempts of parents to control their daughters:

> A young woman in Germany, 22 years old, lives together with her boyfriend. The parents of the woman don't think this is good because they do not like the boyfriend. What can the parents of the woman do?
>
> 1 They must respect the decision of their adult daughter
> 2 They have the right to bring their daughter back to their parents' home
> 3 They can bring their daughter to the police
> 4 They search for another husband for their daughter

On the final day of the orienteering course we saw the film *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland* (2011) by director Yasemin Şamdereli, which depicts the history of guest workers

in Germany across three generations of a Turkish-German family beginning with the arrival of Huseyin to Germany in 1965, the film's main protagonist and the millionth-and-one guest worker in Germany. In *Almanya*, Huseyin, whose recent offer of German citizenship occasions a process of soul-searching and reflection about his identity, announces to his family that he has bought a summer house in his village in Turkey and wants everyone to join him to renovate it. On this journey, we are told the story of Huseyin, his wife and children, by Canan, Huseyin's granddaughter. The tragic comedy and feel-good story of migrants who settled in Germany in the 1960s shows a family which draws together their Turkish roots and German identity and climaxes with Huseyin's acceptance of his granddaughter's pregnancy outside marriage with a British man before he passes away. For Lars, the film offered an important point for his class of predominantly young male refugees from Syria, Iraq and Iran. "People say integration is impossible", he told us, a conclusion that any observer of our class with its often bad-tempered exchanges would certainly have agreed with, "but to me this is nonsense (*quatsch*)". He explained, "rules are rules, feelings are feelings" (*Regeln sind Regeln; Gefühle sind Gefühle*). Feelings, Lars wanted to convey, like those of grandfather Huseyin for his granddaughter Canan, trump the divisions and tensions of the "rules" of religion and culture that divide and segregate communities. It was a message of hope for his latest class of migrants and refugees, at the end of the course designed to lead them towards becoming good citizens.

Resisting the Stigmatised Male Slot

The consequence of discussing gender norms in the integration classes was reactionary responses that seemed to produce stereotypes, rigidity and an intractable sense of difference between Arabs and Europeans. Take, for instance, when Lars critiqued the decision to marry without first getting to know your partner. He asked the class how they are sure who they want to marry, and compared arranged marriage to a "fantasy book". Haitham, a young Iraqi man, joined in and joked, "It is like a watermelon. When I buy a watermelon, I hit it to see if it is good or not". Lars inferred that Haitham shared his doubts about such marriage customs and the tendency for married couples not to live together or have sex before marriage. However, at this point Haitham stopped joking and reacted angrily, turning the tables on Lars he critiqued how in Europe "everything is possible", and that it was worse for people to "get together, live together and have a child" without marriage. A Syrian man in the class described how there is an "interview" with the woman before marriage, and explained that she is anxious that she

must be a virgin. At which point Lars questioned whether it was fair that a woman's virginity is questioned, but a man's is not. A number of students in the class started laughing, and one said, suggestively, "The man is always a virgin!" The speaker, enjoying himself, continued, explaining that if a man wants to marry but doesn't have work or money then he will go into the street and wait for help from God. At this point the class split into groups who were laughing at his description, and those who were incredulous about his Orientalist trope of Arab, Muslim fatalism.

Another debate concerned what constitutes a family. There were different hand-drawn configurations of possible families, including couples, couples with children, homosexual couples with children and the "patchwork family". For each configuration, Lars asked, "Is this a family?" When he asked about the single woman and her child, members of the class responded: *"keine Familie"* (not a family). "Why?" asked Lars. "Because there is no father", they said, provocatively. Lars reasoned that there was a couple and the father died: do we then have the right to say that the woman and her daughter are not a family? He changed the example to a man and his daughter: "would you class this as a family?" The students at the back of the class responded: yes, it is. Lars, growing more incensed, explained that this was discrimination against women, imploring the class: *"Think about it!"(überlegt euch!")*

The class discussions were not always so combative and on some occasions my friends said they had learnt to think differently about an issue. Hamad, a friend who did the course a different time, told me he was affected by the discussion about what constitutes a family, and he agreed with Lars that what matters is that family is based on values of trust and respect. In general, however, this was not the case. There could be a certain humour in these exchanges, where members of the class would seem to goad Lars by saying the opposite to what he wanted. There was light-hearted exaggeration, where they would fulfil his stereotypes casually and even apologetically. This could result in comments, such as, "this is how our religion tells us it should be", and a smile. At other times, it was defensive and angry, and fulfilling the figure of the patriarchal Arab, Muslim man was stated as proper and preferable to an equally stereotyped notion of gender norms in European society.

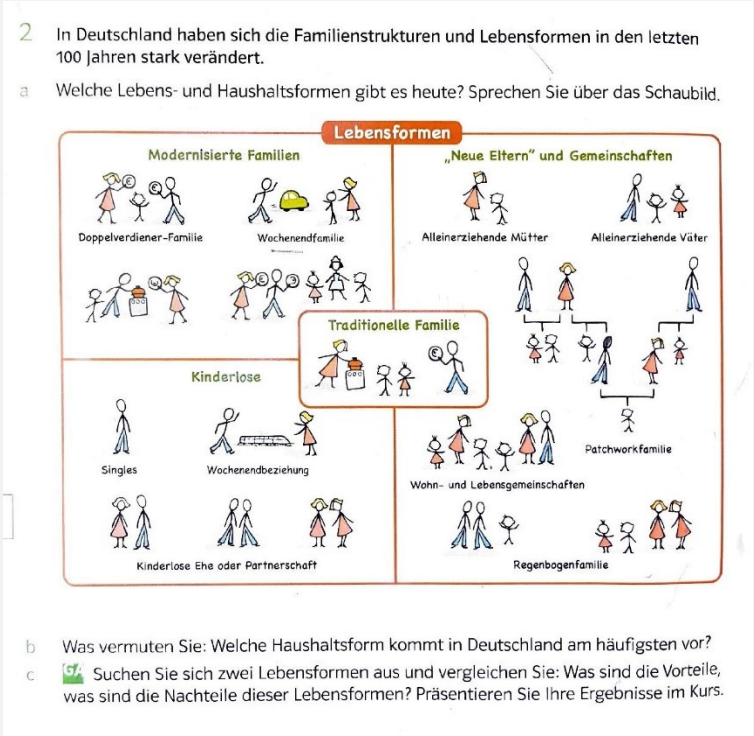

Figure 6 – Different types of family structure in the orienteering course (Kilimann 2017, 62).

The reactions of people in the class often differed considerably to outside of class. Often people I knew who smoked *hashish*, had a German girlfriend (or wanted a German girlfriend), talked about going to "discos", and generally seemed to be at ease with gender norms in Dresden, would become reactionary in the context of the class. I was not the only one to pick up on this. Aliya, a Syrian woman from eastern Syria had studied law in Syria and comes from a family of professionals and intellectuals. She described how she had considerable personal autonomy growing up in an otherwise conservative area. In the class she tended to share the opinion of Lars and was critical of the gender norms that were championed by members of the class. In fact, on the second day of the class when we walked to the train station she steadfastly argued with four men from the group in loud voices about the rights of homosexuals, until Suhail, conscious of how the situation might appear to German onlookers, told everyone to stop. In particular, she was critical about the way young men in the class do not "think for themselves". She told me in an interview after the course,

> They still don't have a clear idea. We came to Germany. We have left the war, and we want protection. OK, *shuw shtaghal laḥālk?* (What are you doing for yourself?) *shuw il-qarār l-nafsak*? (What is right in your opinion?) *bi-nufsak, shuw taʿmil maʿ akhla'ak?* (In your opinion, what do you do with your morals?) *mafī*…. (nothing). I cannot accept the opinion of someone else who just tell me [how things should be]. All of them, these people, with all due respect, these people, and I have met many of them, their lives rotate around having fun (*tslayeh*), going to the gym, and that's it, and coming and going (*talʿa w roḥa*), trips to the disco (*mishwār ʿalal disco*). There is no direction (*mafī shī direction*). I feel that they are lost. But if someone heard them in the class, maybe they would think they have direction. They have direction of religion, but them, no. They make themselves sheikh because they went to pray and after a while they see a girl, they do the opposite. They talk in a bad way.

For Aliya, the difference between class members in everyday life and in the class was a result of not having "direction" and "being lost" and being unable to think for themselves. She criticised what she saw as a default culturalist position, in which angry and lost young men articulated rigid notions of a patriarchal religion and culture without thinking critically. She wants to ask them, "What is *your* opinion?" and tells me that she cannot accept the perspective of people who just tell her how things should be. This was expanded by Aliya in another part of the interview in which she contrasted these men's opinions with those of her father's friends from her hometown who were conservative but would defend their positions and live their lives consistently and were at the same time "open-minded" and able to listen to alternative perspectives and to accept people's differences.

There were similarities between Aliya's comments and the way that some of my interlocutors in the class would speak about her. Although many people liked her personally, and some admired her as "strong" (*qawiyya*), they would often patronise her as someone who "did not think for herself". In marked contrast to the way that they could be cowed by Aliya's powerful and articulate positions in class, they would dismiss her as someone who "just repeated" Lars, "whatever the teacher says, she will repeat it". The issue, at least in conversations with me or when I was present, was not Aliya's values as much as it was the fact that she was perceived to be parroting the expectation of the state that refugees adopt particular norms in order to be acceptable and "integrate". Their criticism of Aliya therefore mirrors her

critique of them; in both cases, the issue is that the other person does not think for him or herself. What this suggests is that for participants in the integration course, articulating the position of "sheikh" was the terms by which they asserted their capacity to think independently and to not parrot Lars or the state. The particular gender discourse of the class should therefore be situated less in terms of a "clash of cultures", which is often how it could sound, and more as a process of expressing agency.

Autonomy and Authenticity

The problematic and contested aspects of "integration" were apparent in the meaning of "being integrated". "Integration" (*indimaj*) could have the meaning of learning German and finding work and becoming a member of society. "To be integrated" (*indimajet*) was short-hand for assimilation and adopting particular social and cultural norms of the host society, as reflected in the orienteering class, and was reviled and disdained as emasculated and passive. I was first introduced to the figure of an "integrated" man on the way to the integration course with Saif and Hisham. They had pointed to an Arab man who they joked was *"indimajet"* because he was holding hands and flirting with a woman on the tram. I was curious about what it meant "to be integrated". What is the difference between "integration" as language learning and finding work, and "to be integrated"? I asked naïvely. They explained that it was doing things that would not have been acceptable in Syria, and they gave the example of kissing in the street. An Arab who does this in Europe, they explained, is *"mukhalaf"* (backwards), or *"ʿando nuqs"* (low self-esteem). "But what is the problem if he does this in Germany?" I asked. Hisham replied, "The same people who do these things are the same people who don't speak the language." He explained, "They just come here and try to fuck as many women as possible, do drugs and drink." However, Saif explained that he would have sex with women at home, without doing these things in public. Hisham added that he too had sex with women in Turkey and Lebanon. In the conversation, Saif and Hisham make it clear that the problem is not the ethics of being with a woman, but the way that this is displayed in public. Through positioning themselves as men who sleep with women, they were disassociating the moral dimension of seeing a woman from the issue of publicly enacting a *European* norm – of "being integrated". The fact that such people ape European norms without being able to speak the language, as Hisham says, is presented as further evidence that it is done without thinking (*bidūn mikh*).

It was not only in the relationships between men and women that there was an anxiety about "integration". It was reflected in a range of situations where the actions of others were perceived to entail uncritically imitating European norms. Take, for instance, the comments of Khalid about another member of our B1 language class when we had a picnic to celebrate the end of the course. Odai, who is from Syria and in his twenties, had brought pork to cook on the barbecue and was one of few people drinking beer. When I left on the tram with Khalid afterwards he expressed his frustration with him drinking. He told me, there were a number of non-Muslims there and they didn't eat pork, or drink alcohol. But he brought lots of pork and was there drinking. "He's Arab, and Muslim!" In his opinion he was trying to show off. "To say 'look at me, look how European I am.'" Then the teacher will think, "wow he's Arab and Muslim, but he drinks. It's stupid." The issue was not drinking itself or eating pork. In fact a number of Khalid's friends drank and smoked *hashish*, although Khalid did not. The issue was the way that such actions were perceived as a kind of unthinking attempt to garner approval from the teacher by fitting in, and it was somehow misplaced and clumsy, or "stupid". The several members of the class who do drink alcohol and eat pork ordinarily did not, out of respect to others, but Odai did.

This was similar to another situation involving Khalid. One day during Ramadan in 2017 I had joined Omar, Khalid and a friend of theirs, Federike, to drink coffee at a café and eat cake together. A few days later, Omar asked me about Khalid: Does he really not fast during Ramadan? He wanted to know if he was pretending not to fast in order to appeal to Federike. This, he explained, would be *"kharouf"* (sheep-like), a term that is usually used to refer to a man who is "under the thumb" of his wife or girlfriend. In this context, it is less about the control of a woman, but rather the kind of emasculation of enacting norms that mark one as acceptable in the German context. The issue therefore is not that he didn't fast during Ramadan, unsurprising considering that Omar also didn't fast, but that he might pretend not to fast in order to "integrate".

The way integration was problematised according to notions of autonomy and authenticity is reflected in responses to homosexuals in Germany. A number of times I was told about Arabs who become openly homosexual in Germany, and on numerous occasions what seemed to be at issue was not homosexuality *per se,* but an open homosexual identity as being non-Arab. Homosexual identity was perceived as contrary to Syrian cultural norms and to reflect a craven kind of integration and desire to fit in. One example of this reaction is from Ali, a Palestinian friend and neighbour of one of my interlocutors, Laith. One day when I visited

Laith, Ali told us about how he had met someone he knew from Syria. He said he was "dressed up like a gay" and he couldn't believe his eyes. He said he kept walking and pretended not to see him but warned that if the man had come up to him and talked to him, he would have punched him in the face. What is interesting, however, is his next comment. He said that he had always known he was gay in Syria, but reflected that as far as he was concerned this is between him and God. The issue was the fact that he was being openly homosexual in Germany in defiance of the perceived norm in Syria, and this was seen by him to represent "being integrated" and therefore a loss of autonomy and authenticity. Ironically, of course, this contrasts to perceptions of a mainstream German audience who would see this as the opposite, being openly homosexual as a process of self-realisation and "coming out".

This is not to say that my interlocutors did not problematise things such as homosexuality or couples dating outside marriage, both of which are uncommon publicly in Syrian and Arab societies. Yet the transition from disapproval to opprobrium and disdain relates to the extent to which these become signifiers of "being integrated" – the perception of following, unthinkingly, European social and cultural norms. This unease and tension is reflected in a third meaning of the term integration. Above, I distinguished between "integration" and the problem of "being integrated". In its third meaning, "to integrate", when said in a suggestive tone of voice, could refer to sleeping with a German woman. This play on words reflects resistance to "being integrated". Rather than conferring the passivity of adopting European social and cultural norms, it expressed agency and autonomy. It was not being *acted* upon, but rather *acting* upon the host society.

We can therefore see the way that discourses of gender relations represent a particular response to the politics of integration in Germany. The production of a conservative discourse mirrors what Leila Ahmed describes for the politics of the veil. For colonial authorities in Egypt in the nineteenth century, the veil and the condition of women in society was seen to epitomise "Islamic inferiority". The result of this narrative was resistance, and the process of turning the veil into a "symbol of the dignity and validity of all indigenous customs" (1992, 163). There seems to be a similar process taking place in the classroom, where men in the class "resist" the stigmatised male slot by assuming this very position. However, precisely because gender discourses were bound up with the imperative to integrate, in other situations my interlocutors could express highly contrasting views.

Situational Discourses of Gender Relations

Gender discourses of my interlocutors share in the idea of "oppositional identities" (Gilliam 2006) that Schmidt (2011) references in the context of transnational marriages in Denmark. Transnational marriages are the cause of controversy and a "moral panic" in Denmark, therefore by marrying abroad, her interlocutors, Somali and Turkish men and women, assert their difference to the mainstream population. Discourses of conservative gender relations and the ideal of a "traditional" Arab woman reflect a similar notion of an "oppositional identity". However, Schmidt makes a further useful point. She shows that even as her interlocutors differentiate themselves from the mainstream Danish public, they invoke values of individualism and choice that actually reflect "Danish values". Among my Syrian and Palestinian interlocutors in Dresden, I observed how conservative notions of proper gender relations could change quite dramatically and the same individuals could, in different contexts, display their "open-mindedness" and even critique views considered to be conservative. If discourses of gender relations were the site of "oppositional identities", deliberately brought forward to mark a refusal of the imperative to integrate, they could at other times take different forms and offer a site in which to express their capacity for inclusion in Germany.

This was reflected in a debate between three friends, Muktar, Ayaan and Sami, who come from the same city in eastern Syria when I joined them on a trip outside Dresden. They told me that they enjoy smoking *hashish* and *ʿargileh* together and talking about "big" and "complicated" issues. It was in this spirit on the evening of the first day of our trip that Sami challenged the others to tell him one difference between Syria and Germany. They discussed religion and language, and then Ayaan said the main difference is how people see women. He said, "Ideas (*afkar*), the opinion, or view of women." The majority of people in Europe think that women should be equal to men in everything.

Sami challenged him on this asking if there are not women who have salaries higher than men in Syria?

"Yes", conceded Muktar, this does happen in Syria.

Ayaan continued to force his point, he said "On Tuesday I was talking to my teacher about marriage, and he said to her: "would you marry your daughter to someone who has bad ethics?" She said, 'the first thing is that you cannot talk about marrying your daughter. It is the daughter who decides for herself!' I told her my opinion."

Seeming to grow more incensed by the conversation, Sami thundered back to Ayaan that this was the same as in parts of Syria. “We have a lot of women who marry who they want to marry!” At which point they agreed it was descending into shouting and was not worth continuing.

This exchange reflects an instance in which there is the articulation of a very different norm of gender relations and problematisation of the distinction between Arabs and Europeans. What the tense debate reflects is the value accorded to processes of thinking critically, weighing up the evidence and being reflective. Sami, at least, has no time for simplistic assertions of difference that stereotype and generalise. He dispels the illusion that all men are breadwinners in Syria, or that women do not get to choose who they want to marry. Here, in a very different context to the combative exchanges of the integration course, there is much more space for thinking differently and openly about the nature and ethics of gender relations and Sami’s opinions are not seen as evidence of “being integrated”. In many respects Sami is atypical of the people I knew. I only met him on a few occasions, but he was keen to represent himself as socially liberal; he talked about his many German friends, his involvement in his city’s trendy music scene and characterised his decision to come to Germany as being primarily about “meeting women”. However, Sami was not the only one who problematised conservative discourses and the construction of a rigid and intractable difference between European and Arab societies. Individuals such as Khalid and Akram, who expressed conservative ideals of gender relations, could articulate very different values in other contexts, revealing that discourses about proper gender relations were not stable and consistent.

I began the chapter with Khalid’s straightforward distinction between “integrated” and “unintegrated” Arab women in Germany. Indeed, Khalid could often express these kinds of views of the rightness and wrongness of gender relations and norms. I was struck one day when we were sitting in Starbucks with a friend of ours, Waseem, and he and Khalid began talking about Yusuf, someone I knew well. It was not unusual to gossip about others in Dresden, but I was surprised because I knew that neither Khalid nor Waseem were friends with Yusuf. I was even more surprised when they criticised Yusuf using terms that conveyed his failed masculinity. They explained that they had seen his WhatsApp profile picture which showed him and his girlfriend together and she was not wearing hijab. For both of them it reflected a lack of self-respect and it was offensive to display his girlfriend like this online. In similar terms to what I describe above in the case of men who are criticised as “integrated”, he failed to live up to the ethical norms of proper masculinity.

On other occasions, however, Khalid seemed to criticise Arab men who were strict and "conservative" husbands. This came up when we went to Berlin one Saturday and we met his cousin by chance on *Sonnenallee*, or "Arab Street". His cousin invited us back to his apartment and we went there to drink coffee and watch television. As soon as we left the apartment, Khalid was incredulous about the fact that he had visited his cousin five or six times and had still not met his wife. He thought this was either because he did not want him to see or meet his wife because he follows a policy of strict segregation, or because he is anxious about Khalid meeting his wife who may not wear hijab. Either way, he complained, this showed that he was "conservative" (*mutʿasab*) and "crazy" (*majnoun*), and he contrasted his cousin's attitude to the relaxed and trusting attitude of his friends whose wives he would frequently meet and enjoyed talking to and spending time with.

Akram also displayed this kind of complex and varying position. In contrast to his self-representation as a patriarchal man, as on our trip to Norway, he could criticise others who refuse to change, or accept the values of the society they are in. Take, for instance, the following exchanges on a tram involving Riad, a pious man in his early thirties, and one of the few people I knew who went to the small mosque in Johannstadt every day. Riad and I were in the same orienteering class and on the way back from the course one day we talked about why, in Islamic opinion, Free Body Culture (*Freikörperkultur*), or FKK, was wrong. Khalid and Akram, who had been at their B2 language class at the same school, were standing nearby, but did not engage with the conversation and fastidiously looked busy on their phones. When Riad got off the tram, they started to criticise him. "He is a Sheikh!" they said mockingly. Khalid was sceptical, "he brings the ideas he has from Syria to Germany, but this is a mistake […] We are in Europe!" Taken aback by their disdain of Riad's uncontroversial view (that Islam does not condone FKK) which had been shared by members of the orienteering class just a few minutes earlier, I asked Akram if he has a problem with FKK? He replied, sounding remarkably similar to Lars, the teacher of the integration programme who he had criticised in the past, "No, if someone has a problem with this then go. You don't need to come to Europe." He said that if people wanted a "Muslim life" then they shouldn't come to Europe.

"Do you think a refugee in Germany needs to be open-minded (*minfitiḥ*)?" I asked.

"Yes, they can have other ideas, but they should keep it inside."

Confronted with the pious and self-righteous discourse of Riad, Khalid and Akram both problematised and mocked what they saw as the mistaken failure to adjust to the new conditions of Germany. I suspect in a different context the issue of FKK might have elicited derision from

Khalid and Akram, whereby refusal of its legitimacy would reflect the virtue of being a refugee in Germany who refuses "to be integrated". Here, however, it was the stage for the expression of a very different attitude. In the particular context of the conversation with Riad what is valorised is the capacity to adjust and be open-minded.

This problematises what has tended to be treated as the tendency for migrant men to adjust to new gender norms or not in the context of displacement, which comes across clearly in Stef Jansen's work with Bosnian men in the Netherlands. He distinguishes between the "serious or modern man" who engages in emplacement and disowns the patriarchal norms of Bosnian society to enact a form of patriarchy "compatible" with the West, and others, who "tended to be perceived, and often perceived themselves, as representatives of a peculiar form of masculinity, of a 'really' patriarchal culture" (2008, 193). In contrast, Ingvars and Gislason show how young, left-wing Syrian refugee activists in Athens "upheld [an] emerging pattern toward gender equality" (2018, 396) through attending demonstrations for women's rights and sharing cleaning and cooking responsibilities equally. In contrast to these accounts, my interlocutors could at times assert conservative opinions on gender norms and, at other times, articulated more "open-minded" and alternative views. This seems to share with the way that discourses about gender norms have been shown to be sites of complex ethical reasoning. Magnus Marsden (2007) has written about this in relation to "elopement" among Chitralis. While people generally disapproved of elopement as dangerous and disruptive to society, they could nonetheless display that they were "modern" through championing the rights of young people to marry freely. Similarly, Schielke has conceptualised "romantic love" as a "grand scheme" among men in the village of Nizrat al-Rayyis in Egypt, which would conflict with and be negotiated alongside other grand schemes, such as Islam (2015). In the context of Dresden, young Syrian and Palestinian men's contrasting accounts of gender relations and norms reflect the way that they are the site for expressions of dignity. At times, this could be reflected in an "oppositional identity" and articulating "hegemonic masculinity", and at others, it was embodied in displaying open-mindedness, acceptance of alternative norms and, with it, the capacity to belong.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored discourses about gender relations among Syrian and Palestinian men in the context of integration policies in Germany. Anxieties about changing gender norms in

displacement have tended to be interpreted as symptomatic of a crisis faced by men unable to fulfil expectations of the masculine slot. One response to such tensions has been to enact "patriarchal restoration", in which displaced men seek to produce dignity in a context of stigma by asserting their "naturalised" claim to power and authority in the sphere of the family. This chapter has expanded on this by showing how in the context of young male Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Germany, such gender discourses are not the result of a default, culturalist position, but reflect a very particular engagement with the "imperative to integrate" in Germany. In this context, discourses and practices of conservative gender relations can be the site for the expression of dignity and virtues of autonomy and authenticity through display of the refusal "to be integrated". At the same time, in contrast to literature on displaced men which has tended to describe how men adjust to a new gender order or don't, this chapter draws attention to how such discourses and practices vary and are situational; in some contexts the ability to be open-minded, think critically and adjust was valorised. In this shifting picture, gender relations could articulate exclusion in Germany or the capacity to belong.

Chapter 4
Affordances of the Far-Right

In March 2016 two Syrian refugees pulled badly-injured Stefan Jagsch, a candidate for the far right NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands)*, out of his car in the state of Hesse. The Syrians were reported to come from precisely the asylum shelter that Jagsch and the NPD had campaigned against and which led the NPD to gain over 10% of the vote in the 2016 local elections in the town of Büdingen. The irony was not lost on local, national and international media as reports contrasted the "helpful Syrians" to the "heartless NPD man" (Jürgs 2016). The Syrians were lauded for their responsibility and responsiveness, including precise details of their actions, such as what they told the firefighters arriving on the scene and their administration of first aid (Oltermann 2016). The Hessian Minister of Economic Affairs, Green politician Tarek Al-Wazir, quoted on Twitter an Arabic proverb: "Shame your enemies by your decency."*

The unfortunate accident of the NPD candidate helps to introduce the central paradox at the heart of this chapter: the capacity for the far right in Germany, which campaigns on a platform of fear and resentment of migrants and minorities, especially Muslim men, to provide a context in which Syrian and Palestinian refugees displayed themselves as "responsible men" and worthy citizens. Literature has explored the extent to which refugees and migrants can face discrimination and victimisation in host societies (Vigh 2009; Lucht 2011). Refugees have been conceptualised as a marginal population without rights and stuck in a "state of exception", or "bare life", embodied in the site of the camp, following Agamben (1998). While ethnography has shown how the inclusion or exclusion of refugees is often a lot more varying, ambivalent

and uncertain than Agamben's concept of "bare life" (Ong 2006), there is no doubt that refugees can face discrimination and exclusion. Refugees and migrants can find themselves turned into what Stephens, writing about US policies of immigration control, has termed "pre-emptive suspects" (Stephen 2018). This can be particularly difficult for male migrants. In the UK, Griffiths (2015) has shown how male asylum applicants whose racialised gender associates them with "agency, illegality, and/or criminality", conflicts with border officials' expectations of refugees as "feminised" and "passive" suffering bodies. Migrant men can also find themselves at much greater risk of victimisation for breaking labour market restrictions (Turner 2016). In their study of the representation of the refugee crisis, Castaneda and Holmes (2016) have explored the deployment in mainstream media and in the discourse of politicians of "deserving" and "undeserving" refugees. While Syrians in Germany were often seen as "deserving", they have nonetheless been the object of negative characterisations, stereotypes and discrimination. They have been portrayed as "benefit scroungers" (Pearlman 2017), anti-Semites (Özyürek 2016) and, in the aftermath of the attacks in Paris in November 2015, as "terrorists". In the wake of sexual assaults in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015/16, male refugees were represented as threats to German women in what Kosnick (2019) has termed a "moral panic".

Closely related to such discrimination and negative representation is the emergence of far right political parties and social movements. The "refugee crisis" in 2015-16 has led to a surge of support for the far right in Germany, who utilised events to raise questions about immigration and its threat to a "native" national identity and population. This includes discourses which serve to represent refugees as either threatening and dangerous or "cowards" (Rettberg & Gajjala 2016). Scholars have explained support for the far right according to the notion of "politicised places", in which the arrival of migrants combines with national anti-immigrant rhetoric (Hopkins 2010), as well as a consequence of urban inequalities (Kandylis & Kavoulakos 2013). In Germany, Bock (2018) has shown how the refugee crisis led to the growth of the far right by functioning as a "catalyst" to "pre-existent discontent with austerity and multicultural liberalism" (394). In Sweden, Kimmel has explored how joining extremist far right groups can be the site of masculine maturity and a "rite of passage" (2007). There has also been interest in the strategies for dissemination and popularisation of the far right, such as the important role of marches in creating "collectives of emotion" (Virchow 2007). Alongside what drives support for the far right, there has been close attention to its impact on politics and society. In Germany, for example, scholars have explored the extent to which Pegida is likely

to become a long-term political influence (Dostal 2015) and its effect on mainstream political parties (Stier et al. 2017).

The plethora of work on the far right has not produced similar attention to the impact of its emergence on the lived experience of migrants and minorities. One exception is a piece by Machtans (2016) which explores the bind facing Islamic organisations in Germany who can inadvertently produce representation of Muslims as a collective and undifferentiated front in their condemnation of the far-right and its effect on society. In general, however, there has been little interest in the effect of far right parties and social movements on the lived experience of migrants and refugees. In Greece, Ingvars and Gislason (2018) elude to the formation of broader coalitions of solidarity between citizens and refugees in response to the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn but do not elaborate on the implications of this for their campaign in garnering support from the wider public.

In this chapter, I seek to show the consequences for Syrians and Palestinians of living in the centre of far right politics in Germany. For my friends, the experience of hostility and discrimination would regularly be identified as the worst aspect of living in Dresden. The consequences of being singled out in front of a packed bus by an intolerant bus driver, for instance, could ruin a day and generate a lasting feeling of unwelcome. There could be concerns about safety and the perception of rigged bureaucratic decisions could make life harder and more uncertain. In most cases, the response of Syrians and Palestinians was to avoid trouble and keep their heads down. The experience of discrimination in Dresden was often closely linked to the far right, as someone who was discriminatory, for example, would be labelled a "Nazi" - an indelicate term which had little to do with people described as, or self-identifying as, neo-Nazis. However, responses to organised expressions of the far right could be very different. Rather than being part and parcel of the same picture of discrimination and inhospitality in Dresden, it was often treated as something distinct. I explore how this could take different forms, where the far right was seen as both indicative of native German society and, in other instances, its "abject Other". Within both these conceptions of the far right there emerged a space in which to make a claim to belong in Germany as "responsible men", either as worthy individuals in contrast to unworthy refugees, or as refugees collectively in the face of the far right. In doing so, the far right afforded a space in which refugees could challenge their representation in the public sphere.

"There are too many men"

There was a general perception among my friends that refugees were disliked and distrusted in German society and especially in Dresden. Dresden was often described as "the most beautiful city with the worst people" because of people's hostility to refugees, and most of my friends had countless experiences in which they felt victimised. Public transport often seemed to be a site of such hostility. The experience of Rasheed, an Iraqi man in his early thirties who was a friend of one of my interlocutors, Mohammed, is typical. He told me one evening when Mohammed and I visited him that earlier in the day the driver of a bus he was riding on in Dresden had walked from the front of the bus to the back door and shouted at him in front of everyone to move away from the door. As he sat on the edge of a sofa smoking *ʿargileh* and looking shaken by the experience, he said, "It is racism. They would never speak to a German like that!" After the incident he had cancelled his plans and gone home to lie down in his apartment for the rest of the day. Such accounts of verbal abuse, or more subtle behaviours such as being stared at, were common complaints among my friends. Khalid, for example, described his dismay when he heard a "shutter" go off and saw a woman pointing her phone at him to take a picture. When I asked why she might want to take a photo, he said she would probably share it online and say, "ha, look at this refugee!"

These experiences reflect the point made by Hargreaves (2016) in the context of Muslims in the UK when he writes that most people complained of staring, verbal abuse and indifference rather than verbal and physical assaults. The experience of hostility and indifference, or the sharing of such experiences by other people, could create an almost constant sense of anticipation of hostility that served to exacerbate further the feeling of being unfairly treated and victimised. Mundane frustrations of everyday life could be situated in a broader terrain of hostility and exclusion, such as a bus driver refusing to wait. This happened a number of times and the explanation was always the "small-mindedness" (*ʿaql ṣaghīr*) of the driver. This was the case one evening when I joined Abdelkarim and his brother Nasser to a German language class at a small Pentecostal church on the outskirts of Dresden. After the event, Abdelkarim and I ran to the bus stop to meet the bus as it pulled up and we tried half-heartedly to block the doors from closing while we waited for Nasser who was running towards us. When Nasser was only metres away, the driver managed to close the doors and abruptly took off, forcing us to wait thirty minutes for the next bus. For Abdelkarim and Nasser, it was a clear example of racism. However, this was not unusual in Dresden, where punctuality often

trumped whether or not people made it on to a bus or tram, and I had seen many Germans suffer a similar fate.

Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden would experience what Fraser has defined as "misrecognition", when "institutionalized patterns of cultural value constitute some actors as inferior, excluded, wholly other, or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction" (Fraser in Fraser & Honneth 2003, 29 in Kleist 2010, 5). To this extent, Syrians and Palestinians share the experience of hostility and discrimination of Muslim minorities more broadly in Germany, as reflected by German converts to Islam who complain of becoming "third-class citizens" and losing respect in public life (Özyürek 2014, 46). This sense of being excluded or "Other" was understood to centre around particular tropes. My friends would talk openly about how Germans were suspicious of them as potential "terrorists" in the wake of attacks perpetrated, or initially suspected of being perpetrated, by refugees from Syria, such as the attack on the Bataclan in Paris in November 2015. There was awareness that mainstream society feared them as patriarchal and misogynistic, which, as I showed in Chapter 3, could result in an exaggeration of precisely these norms as it becomes a stage for the expression of autonomy and authenticity in contexts such as the orienteering class. Yet in everyday life my friends lived in the shadow of such perceptions. Mohammed, for example, described his feeling of being under constant suspicion from Germans at the gym he attended that he would behave inappropriately towards women who were training there. As a result, he would avoid using machines that put him in close proximity to any women.

The consequence of being victimised and the perception that as young male refugees they were already "suspects" shaped people's conduct in everyday life. This helps to explain the reflections of Laith and Jamil during an incident while we were riding on trams and drinking to pass the time one evening. At one stop on the outskirts of Dresden an Algerian man had stood up in the other compartment and shouted in Arabic to an Arab woman sitting close to us that she was a "whore", before he exited. As the tram left the stop he hit the window where she was sitting. For her part, the woman defiantly shouted back, before turning to two German friends to explain what he had said. Afterwards, I asked Laith and Jamil what they would have done if the man had approached the woman and I was surprised when they said they would not have intervened to protect her. Jamil explained it would be too risky as Syrians in Germany and Laith agreed. Laith gave an example of his friend to illustrate what could happen if they did get involved. He told me that his friend had helped an elderly woman who had been pushed over but was then accused by the woman of being the one who did it! Jamil said that if they

did do something then they would move away and call the police. When I asked if this is what they would do in Syria, they laughed incredulously and indicated that in Syria they would definitely intervene. In contrast to Syria therefore, Laith and Jamil were hamstringed by the association of Syrian migrant men as dangerous and the potential for their actions to be misconstrued. When we eventually left the tram and waited by the stop to return to the city there was a woman stood on her own. Jamil turned to me and said, sarcastically: "the German woman should feel unsafe because there are two Arab men who might attack her, right?"

The conversation with Laith and Jamil on the tram is a good example of how the climate of suspicion as stigmatised refugee men could result in a determination to avoid trouble. This was often the response of my friends to perceptions of discrimination. Akram explained this to me as a way to get by in a position of powerlessness when I approached him one day to ask for advice about a problem with the manager of the company owning my apartment in Dresden in late 2017, a couple of months before I was due to leave.

The manager of the company had agreed that I could hand over the apartment to someone as a *Nachmieter* (new tenant) to complete the rest of the contract. However, when I approached her with details about my friend Hussein, a Syrian refugee in his early thirties, she refused. The problems confronting refugees in finding apartments have been documented (El-Kayed & Hamann 2018), and this was often a considerable challenge for my interlocutors. This company, however, was one of the few in Dresden that was willing to rent to refugees, or so I thought. The manager explained to me in a surprisingly candid way that they had a new policy of not accepting Syrian *male* refugees. They had been "overrun" by Syrian men, she said, and she complained that they have too many guests, they make too much noise on weekday evenings, they hang around the building at night, and they intimidate female residents. She said she would accept a Syrian refugee woman, but not a man. A few days later, I wrote asking her to re-consider her ban on Syrian refugee men or I would see what options there were to take legal action because she was discriminating against Hussein on the basis of gender and nationality. In response, she went on the offensive. She denied their policy of refusing Syrian refugee men and explained that I could not leave the contract.

It was in this context that I visited Akram to ask if he would help me decide what to say to the manager the following day, but his opinion about the situation was derisory. He mocked my attempts to hold her to account, "You are not giving a lecture at university!" he said after I finished the speech I had rehearsed. It is "her country" and "her company" and he spread his hands out to illustrate the gulf in power. He said I should go there and "say whatever you need

to say to get a *Nachmieter*. Kiss her arse. Kiss wherever you need to kiss to get her to agree." For Akram, the notion of challenging her was a losing battle. While he might sympathise with the cause, he saw it as naïve and thought it would only harm myself.

Akram's attitude can be situated in the strategy for survival that had enabled him to get by the past five years as a young man in Lebanon and then Turkey after fleeing Syria in 2011. Yet, he explained to me such an attitude was also an important part of growing up in Syria,

> In Syria, we are used to this. If someone is bigger than someone else, you kiss their arse. You do whatever you have to do. There is an expression in Arabic: If you need something from a dog, you call it *sīdī* (sir). And all the people who tell you to do something about it, to make a complaint, go to court, they would do exactly the same.

Discrimination was not, in the opinion of Akram, something that could be changed. Even if I went to court, he explained later in the conversation, the judges would always believe her over me because she is German. Akram's strategy was therefore to call the dog *"sīdī"* and avoid trouble. In other conversations, he suggested that this would change once he was given the right to remain (*qadm liju'*) and did not face his current condition of legal uncertainty. Until that time he intended to keep a low profile.

Not everyone saw the need to avoid trouble like Akram, or Jamil and Laith. In fact, when I told Omar about the situation with the manager he said it was incumbent on me that I do not accept her terms of finding an alternative *Nachmieter*. "If you stay quiet, you are like the devil", he told me. Yet, in practice, there were limits to what Omar imagined as his capacity to hold Germans to account. This was apparent on my last evening in Dresden. We had queued up at a club in Neustadt called Downtown and were getting ready to enter when the bouncer looked at Omar's ID and said matter-of-factly he could not enter. He did not give a reason, but he said Omar could go to the bar above, called Groove Station. Adopting a more reasonable tone, or trying to stave off inevitable protestations, he explained that Omar could enter the club if the bouncers at the main entrance radioed to say he was allowed. We walked back to the main entrance and the man said we couldn't enter because "there are too many men" (*es gibt zu viele Männer*) in the club. In fact, the issue was very clearly that he was a *Syrian* man, reflected by the way that the two German men waiting behind us had not faced any obstacles. When Omar retorted, "it's not because there are too many men, it is because I am Syrian", the

security guard became defensive, challenging Omar to label him a "Nazi". We walked away quietly, Omar in a quiet anger, disappointment and shame. *"ana ikhjal minak"* (I feel shy towards you) he told me after we entered a different club and got a drink, "it's your last night and we couldn't enter the club because of me". He articulated his frustration at the stigma of his identity as a refugee man in Dresden. However, his mood quickly changed from regret and shame to frustration and revenge as we stood outside the second club and smoked a cigarette. He imagined that the tables were turned, and he was in the position of power and it was them, Germans, who were forced to flee their homeland to Syria. He imagined them queuing up outside a club in his city in Syria where he would tell them they could not enter, repeating the words he would use: *"weil du Deutsch bist!"* (because you are German!) Yet such a fantasy goes to show his own powerlessness to enjoy the position of authority of the bouncers outsider the club in Dresden, as such a reversal of power relations would only be possible in an unlikely future scenario in his hometown in Syria.

Omar did tell me once about his friend who speaks German well and had held a woman to account after she was rude to him on a tram. His friend told her, he said, admiringly, "Do I not have two eyes like you? Am I not a person like you?" There were other accounts of responses. One friend bragged about hitting a German man who poured beer on him in the tram and offended Prophet Mohammed. In general, however, hostility and discrimination were seen as part of everyday life and most people sought to avoid trouble. The satisfaction of imagining fighting back or standing up for yourself was often articulated in a particular future, or an elsewhere. In Akram's case, it was when he became a citizen; for Omar, it was a future point in Syria. The options for challenging discrimination were therefore limited and had the effect of producing a sense of being second class members of society. This presents a contrast to victimisation by the far right which, far from eliciting a sense of exclusion and hopelessness, seemed to open up a space in which to produce narratives of belonging and even the space to perform such belonging to a German public.

The Far Right in Dresden

Saxony, and its capital Dresden, are the centre of the growing populist far right in Germany. In September 2017, *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), whose then co-leader, Frauke Petry, was based in Freital, near Dresden, became the first far right party to enter the Bundestag since the Second World War. AfD formed the largest opposition party after the election with 13% of the

vote, and Saxony was the only state where the AfD won an overall majority, gaining 27% of the vote. Dresden was also the site of the founding of the controversial and influential Pegida movement, later set up across cities throughout Germany (Legida in Leipzig, for example), but never with the same success as in Dresden. The organisation reached the height of its popularity and influence in early 2015 at the time of the "refugee crisis", when as many as 25,000 people protested in the centre of the city on Monday evenings. Pegida continued to meet every Monday during my fieldwork, often drawing hundreds of people for its *"Spaziergänge"* (walk) through the centre of the city.

How do people explain the success and influence of the far right in Saxony and especially Dresden? Most commentators emphasise the role of the communist past. According to this theory, the culture of GDR, the German Democratic Republic, explains the appeal of the authoritarian far right (Chazan 2017). The history of the GDR also meant East Germans were relatively unused to foreigners because, unlike the migration of Turkish *Gastarbeiter* in the 1960s in West Germany, GDR did not witness similar migration, although there were small-scale labour programmes with Vietnam, Mozambique and other communist or non-aligned states. Also there was never the same education and atonement about the Nazi past as in West Germany because in the GDR, under the influence of the Soviets, the atrocities of the Nazis were represented as the responsibility of West Germany. The most convincing explanation for the appeal of the far right, however, which was common among Dresdeners too, is the existential and material ramifications of the *Wende*, or reunification. Post-1989 saw a loss of community and family members who left to find work in the west of Germany, as well as a loss of employment and the indignity of overlordship by institutions and personnel from the once-despised West (Berdahl 1999). Even twenty-five years after unification, inequality still exists between former East and West Germany in employment and wages. The far right can be seen to answer to these frustrations and disappointments, as well as the bewilderment of change. In this context, Dresden, as state capital and the traditional regional centre of economy, government and culture, has become a site for the expression of such tendencies, even as the city itself often seemed to have less of an immediate far right presence than other parts of Saxony and elsewhere in eastern Germany, reflected, for instance, in the fact that the centre-right CDU party kept its seat in Dresden in the 2017 federal election. Dresden also did not witness the kind of riots and violence of neighbouring Chemnitz over discontent with refugees in 2018. Here, I briefly elaborate on the recent history of AfD and Pegida.

Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)

AfD burst on to the political stage when it narrowly missed the 5% threshold to enter the German parliament in the 2013 federal election, just six months after it was founded in April 2013. Set up in Bad Nauheim in Hesse by economics professor Bernd Lucke and other business leaders and journalists, including, like Lucke, some former members of the CDU, the party was set-up to campaign on economic policy, and specifically against the euro at the time of the eurozone crisis and the bailout of Greece. Despite certain right-wing tendencies, such as claiming that nationalist pride is discouraged in Germany (as reflected in one of its main campaign slogans, "*Mut zu Deutschland*", which can be translated as "dare to stand by Germany"), it did not display populist far right policies or language, which Azheimer defines as "nativism", "authoritarian tendencies" (a "preference for strictly ordered society, strong leadership and severe punishments for offenders"), and a "thin" ideology of pure people against a corrupt, political elite, and majority rule above human rights (Arzheimer 2015, 537). While this may be the case, the view of the electorate in the 2013 federal election shows that the majority of its support did not come from voters concerned with economic policy but from concerns over migration and integration (Schmitt-Beck 2017). This election saw a split in AfD, between its founder, Lucke, and a more radical wing led by Frauke Petry who moved the party further to the right, shifting emphasis from the Eurozone crisis to the issue of immigration as well as "lifestyle politics", such as the "three-child family". This resulted in Bernd Lucke leaving the party in 2015 after losing the leadership to Petry, worn down by her faction's "nationalist and xenophobic statements and lack of loyalty" (Grabow 2016, 174). The success of AfD in the 2017 election campaign was based on mobilising the electorate's anxieties about immigration, and especially Muslim refugees. Their campaign posters included explicit reference to the threat of Islam and migration and one of the demands of the party was an investigation into the legality of Merkel's decision to open the borders to refugees.

Figure 7 – AfD poster in the lead up to federal election in September 2017 (Photo by author, 2017)

Pegida

Germany has for a long time had active right-wing groups and networks (Virchow 2007). More recently, as issues of immigration and integration have become more widespread, these low-profile, neo-Nazi groups have been superseded by populist, less radical groups. The most renowned of which is Pegida: Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*). Pegida was founded as a protest movement in Dresden in October 2014 by Lutz Bachmann when it was announced that Dresden would house 12 refuge centres. Pegida is concerned with what it terms a “culture war” *(Kulturkampf)* and accuses political elites and businesspeople of colluding in “ethnic redeployment” *(Umvolkung)* in which ethnic Germans are replaced by ethnic minorities. It warns of the threat of “parallel societies” and Sharia law and agitates for closer ties to Russia. They are deeply critical of elites, which includes the media, who they term *“Lügenpresse”* (lying press), and politicians, described as *“Volksverräter”* (traitors of the people). They hold especial scorn for Merkel, who is the focus of a number of chants, such as *“Merkel muss weg”* (Merkel must go). Unlike AfD, it was not founded by a disaffected, politically influential,

intellectual class. The founder, Bachmann, for instance, was a serial criminal who fled to South Africa in 1998 after being sentenced to prison for several years. Yet the party has appeal among a range of socio-economic groups, and people attending the meetings often have higher formal education and a regular income (Grabow 2016). The organisation is best known for its weekly *"Spaziergänge"* taking place every Monday evening in the centre of Dresden, characterised by distinctive chants and the prevalence of German flags which are still largely taboo in Germany. In June 2018, the demonstration was in the news because of chants of "sink, sink, sink" among supporters in reference to refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean. However, despite continuing to court controversy, commentators have observed how the evening walks play an important function in distinguishing Pegida from violent far right groups (Bittner 2015).

The Reason of the Far Right

Discrimination in everyday life in Dresden was closely linked by my interlocutors to the organised far right. The bouncer who prevented Omar entering the club, for example, was labelled "Nazi" and would be assumed to be affiliated with Pegida and AfD. Indeed, it was the presence of the far right that was often given as an explanation of the particular challenges associated with living in Dresden as the city of the "worst people". The success of the far right nationally was also the cause of anxiety and could lead to doubts about the future. In Chapter 1, for example, I cited the example of Mohammed who was anxious to find work as soon as possible after AfD's success in the 2017 federal elections. Yet the response of many Syrians I knew to the success of AfD in the elections was not that this represented an unavoidable threat to their future in Germany, owing to their status as Arabs and refugees, but that it was a threat to *some* refugees: refugees who were not doing something with their lives, "dependent" refugees and criminals.

The way that the far right produced a distinction between worthy and deserving refugees and despised others could be articulated in encounters with its members. In a discussion about Pegida during the orienteering course, for example, one member of the class, Aliya, told us about her brother who had an accident on his bike when he was cycling through the Großer Garten (Great Garden) in the centre of Dresden and was helped by what happened to be "two members of Pegida". They said to him, she told the class, they do not have a problem with people like him who came to Germany to work, they only have a problem with people who don't work and live from benefits. In her narrative about her brother's encounter with the

far right, Aliya communicated the distinction between worthy and unworthy refugees, and how her brother fits firmly into the former category.

This was part of a pattern of accounts of encounters with the far right where initial hostility would appear to give way to a change of attitude after recognising that a refugee was working or was respectable in some other way. In some cases, being "accepted" by the far right could represent a kind of rite of passage or transition. This was the case for Laith, for example. For a long time Laith struggled to be accepted in the bar at the bottom of the building opposite to where he lived. He repeatedly received abuse from patrons even as he had warm relations with the two women who ran the bar. In the men's toilets, there was a sticker declaring that this is a *"Nazi Kreis"* (Nazi area) with an image of a rifle. However, it was a source of pride for Laith and an expression of change in his status that over time he was able to be accepted by customers in the bar. When I visited one day in mid-2017, he told me they were now friendly to him because they would see him come to the bar late at night after a long day at work at his brother's restaurant. Being accepted by patrons at a bar which had neo-Nazi stickers was therefore emblematic of his transition from refugee to "non-refugee", as someone who works and is contributing to German society.

The far right could be instrumentalised by my friends to distinguish between worthy and unworthy refugees. I described above the construction of refugees as either violent "terrorists" or "cowards" fleeing conflict and leaving women and children behind. This discourse was the terms by which Khalid, who is Palestinian, distinguished himself as a worthy and masculine man in contrast to Syrians fleeing Syria when he told me about an exchange he had one day with a member of Pegida who was demonstrating. The context for this is the distinction between Palestinians and Syrians fleeing the conflict in Syria, which I explore in more detail in Chapter 6. What is significant for understanding the following account is that while Syrians fled their homeland, for Palestinians, leaving Syria was experienced as a move from one form of statelessness to another. Khalid told me,

> I once talked to a Nazi. It was early on and there was a Pegida demonstration. I asked him, "why are you demonstrating?" He told me, "when we had a war here, we stayed. It was difficult, but we stayed in our country. If there is a war in Syria, then people should go there and fight. But why is it all the young men are coming to Germany?" Because you know, it's mainly *shabāb* here. And I agree with him,

> if you want to fight Assad, or you are with Assad, you should go back to Syria and fight.

Although the member of Pegida directs his ire at men fleeing Syria indiscriminately, Khalid marshals this to distinguish himself, as a Palestinian, from Syrians, on the premise that while Syrians were either for or against Assad and were invested in their country, this was not significant for him. In other words, Syrians were cowards for fleeing their homeland, unlike him as a Palestinian. In fact, for Khalid and others, migration to Germany could be seen as a step closer to "return" to Palestine. The far right discourse that young male refugees are cowards is therefore taken on by Khalid to distinguish himself from the figure of an emasculated *Syrian* refugee.

What this shows therefore is the way that the far right could become the terms to express emic conceptions of worthiness and a site in which one could perform "insiderness" in relation to others. Such "insiderness" could even find expression through processes of "becoming" the far right. This could take the form of ironically repeating the slogans of Pegida, for instance. My friends would often spontaneously shout *"Ausländer aus"* (foreigners out), or *"schize Ausländer"* (shit foreigners). If an *"Ausländer*" was talking too loudly on a tram, or had his or her feet on the chairs, someone might say this in varying degrees of mock, ironic disapproval. While this was mostly done for humour, shouting expressions of the far right had the effect of symbolically turning the speaker into an insider, as someone capable of marshalling German to exclude someone else. I sensed for some of my friends there was an enjoyment in this role-play and adopting a position that distanced them from the figure of an outsider. This was also the case in instances in which someone literally joined a Pegida demonstration. Jamil told me, for instance, about a time he joined a Pegida march from the main train station. He boasted about how no one knew he was Syrian, reflecting his bravery and guile, but also his similitude: he was unrecognisably *"Ausländer"* as a result of his fair complexion and his ability to perform like an insider.

In the context of Dresden and the stigma associated with refugeeness, discourses of approval or recognition by the far right offered one measure of displaying their status as worthy citizens. Such a discourse emerged from processes in which Pegida and AfD were constructed as "native". This was apparent in Khalid's account above of an old, wizened German man recounting his war-time resilience, for example. In fact, this could be something of a bonus of living in Dresden. There was a trend among Syrian and Palestinian friendship groups

distributed around different parts of Germany to exaggerate the benefits and advantages of their city to one another. What this seemed to express was one's fortune and perhaps implicitly, accomplishment. It could therefore be a kind of competitive stakes leading people to make exaggerated claims about the advantages of where they lived. Boasting about Dresden tended to centre on two claims. The first was the relative abundance of affordable housing compared to places like Hamburg or Berlin. The second was that it offered the "real" Germany. In what could sound like the ethnicised discourse of the far right, cities such as Stuttgart, Hamburg and Berlin were often criticised by my friends as being "all foreigners" (*kulu ajānib*). Khalid told me this one day after he returned from a trip to Stuttgart. He pointed to a white man walking on the other side of the road and said in Stuttgart you don't see this. *This*, he explained, is the advantage of being in Dresden: you meet Germans, and you can speak German. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that the far right, consisting of predominantly white, middle-aged men, could be seen as legitimating claims of worthiness. However, the far right had a complex position for my interlocutors. Its perception as the embodiment of Germany was accompanied by a second discourse, one in which they were a minority, or fringe group, at odds with Germany's liberal, democratic modern history.

The Far Right as "Other"

While the far right could offer terms for distinguishing worthy from unworthy refugees, there was at the same time differentiation between the far right and "Germans". Germans could be described as reasonable, open-minded, Christian, and even clean; "Nazis" could be characterised as unclean, immoral and atheist. At times, the far right could be associated with a foreign power or interests. Bassem explained to me while we were waiting to see his supervisor at the Jobcenter that Pegida was a Russian plot to weaken Germany, for example. His imaginative rationale was that the arrival of refugees had led Germany to direct its overseas development aid inwards in order to provide for the newcomers and this in turn strengthened its economy. Pegida, by demonstrating against refugees, sought to end this and subsequently weaken Germany. Although no one else seemed to share Bassem's concern about Germany's budget for development, it was common for Pegida to be associated with non-Germans, especially German-Russian migrants in the 1990s. In part, this might be because of the display of Russian flags during demonstrations (see Figure 8), reflecting a tendency among far right groups across the West to valorise the strong-man leadership of Russian president, Vladimir

Putin (Arzheimer 2015). There was also an impression of xenophobia among ethnic German migrants from Russia in the 1990s, in part, perhaps, because of the murder of Egyptian engineering student Marwa El-Sherbini in 2009 in Dresden by Russian-born Alex Wiens.

Content removed: 'Figure 8 – German and Russian flags at a Pegida demonstration in Theatreplatz (Photo by author, 2016)'

The perception of the far right as being non-German shares with a wider conception, as outlined in the constitution, that modern Germany and its citizenry is established in opposition to fascism. As Ewing writes,

> the modern German state is founded as a recurring act of renunciation, in which Germany as a modern democracy is defined in opposition to the repressive Nazi regime. The Nazi as extremist is abjected, as that which […] the modern German is not. (2012, 205)

It is this "Otherness" to a German, liberal tradition which helps to situate the account of the car crash of Stefan Jagsch, the NPD politician in Hesse, that I began the chapter with. In a context

in which Jagsch is the "Other", the two Syrian refugees are, by comparison, situated as people who belong in Germany. This is part of a much broader trend in which newspapers were "supportive of the cause of refugees and hostile toward right-wing populist movements such as Pegida" (Vollmer & Karakayali 2018, 120). It is this capacity for the emergence of solidarity and recognition between refugees and the mainstream German population that informed the discourse of my interlocutors. Here, the far right was not a native arbiter of worthiness, but an "abject Other", facilitating terms of inclusion as a democratic and liberal citizen.

The capacity for the far right to enable solidarity with the wider population is reflected in the observations of Suhail about participation in elections in Germany. Suhail is in his mid-twenties and was politically aware, actively participating in the short-lived revolutionary moment on his university campus in Syria. In Germany he thought he would not vote in elections because he could not endorse any party. Although he liked the Green Party, he could not vote for them "because they agree to anything", including things he is against, such as gay marriage. The only exception to this state of affairs is the issue of the far right, he would unite with the majority of people in voting to stop "Nazis" from coming into power. This calculus was already apparent in Suhail's activism in Dresden. As I explore in Chapter 6, Suhail and other Syrian friends were reticent about activism for Syria in Dresden, which was seen to risk undermining belonging in Germany. The one issue, however, that led Suhail to join a demonstration was in defence of Mission Lifeline, a boat owned by a charity based in Dresden to conduct search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. The rescue operation was the topic of controversy when a Pegida rally was reported to have shouted "drown, drown, drown" about migrants following a speech by Siegfried Däbritz in which he attacked Mission Lifeline. Suhail told me with pride about the rally he joined to defend and show support for the boat and the organisation. In the context of Germany, Suhail's political activism centred on issues that had the capacity to form broader anti-far right solidarity.

This draws attention to how the far right offers a space for horizontal politics. It shares resonances with what Kallius et al. (2016) have shown in the context of Budapest at the height of the so-called refugee crisis when citizens and refugees came together in "horizontal politics" in order to oppose the "vertical politics" of the Hungarian state and NGOs. For Syrians and Palestinians, the potential for "horizontal politics" in response to the far right opened up a space in which to subvert their victimisation as either threatening and dangerous men, or cowards, to a German public. This certainly isn't the case for everyone victimised by the far right in Germany. Others could fear the effect of the far-right in prompting anti-Islam sentiment in

wider society. Lamya Kaddor, the head of the Liberal Islam Network in Germany, for example, described her insecurity about the emergence of the far right in Germany: "[e]very Muslim in Germany has experienced being inducted into the collective 'you Muslims'. An inferiority complex develops from this experience because society permanently suggests that 'you don't belong'." (Machtans 2016, 94) As a Muslim German, the discourse of the far right produces exclusion as there is a growing narrative of Muslims being unable to belong in Germany. For a number of my friends, however, the far right could have the effect of providing an opportunity to negotiate their belonging in wider society through what Ingvars and Gislason term "responsible masculinity" (2018). This is apparent in the observations of Omar around the time of the success of AfD in the federal elections.

Omar told me once that his friend from Stuttgart joked that AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*) stood for "*Ausländer für Deutschland"* (Foreigners for Germany). The joke, we agreed, could only be made by someone who didn't live in Dresden. Yet, unintentionally, it encapsulates the way that the far right could create a space in which Omar and others expressed their capacity to belong in Germany. When Omar and I met at a café the day after the 2017 election he asked if I had seen the results and told me that AfD got 13% of the vote! I added that in Saxony they got 30% of the vote and only narrowly came second in Dresden. He was surprised, "They are stupid, they are donkeys", he said angrily. "You know the German economy is stronger now because of us refugees. In 2016, the economy was the strongest it has ever been. If it wasn't for refugees, the economy would have gone down."

For Omar, the far right vote elicited a defence of the role of refugees in strengthening the country. Omar also saw that part of the role of refugees in Germany was to challenge and defuse the far right. Rather than victims of a far right that grew in popularity and power as a result of the arrival of refugees, Omar saw refugees at the forefront of keeping the far right at bay in order to defend Germany's liberal and democratic tradition. After all, he explained, the far right was around well before the arrival of refugees. His argument centred on the rule introduced in 2016 that refugees cannot leave the state where they are placed (except in certain conditions, such as finding a job elsewhere), which aims to prevent the formation of ethnic enclaves in certain areas. Omar saw it as establishing the role of refugees in challenging the far right,

> The government is using refugees to challenge the Nazis in Germany. They know that if people live with refugees and get used to refugees, then they will no longer support the far right. It's true. People in Germany are afraid of Nazis. And you hear

> stories of people who used to support AfD and then they made a friendship or relationship with a refugee and changed how they think.

In this interpretation, refugees are favoured by the government to take on the far right, becoming defenders of the integrity of the state and its democratic tradition. He articulates a picture of "responsible" masculinity, in which refugees are able to take on the far right when Germans are "terrified".

This potential for solidarity with Germans was an important part of Omar's concern for how refugees represent themselves in Germany. This is reflected in a discussion he had with his friends one night about how to respond to the racism and discrimination they faced in Germany. He and his friends would regularly gather at each other's homes and eat, play cards (*triks*) and catch up. On this particular evening they had been talking about their experiences of racism and the far right and how fed-up they were of being discriminated against. Omar told me that in the heat of the conversation one of his friends had told the group that "Germans are *kuffār* (unbelievers)", and that they should show them their strength, suggesting they go to the street and do a demonstration. Omar asked me if I knew what Arab demonstrations were like? "We march, and shout, we are like donkeys. We will stay sitting in the middle of the road!" In his account of the demonstration, Omar emphasised the excesses of Arab men in ways that reflect what Jansen describes among some Bosnian men as the sense of their own masculine excess compared to the local population (2008). Yet he and others in the group were mindful of the implications of what their friend was suggesting. Omar explained to me that he told his friend that there was a risk that they would turn friendly Germans against them. Their fantasy on a Friday night of asserting their strength as young men confronted the need to represent themselves well to the German public. Their vulnerability as refugees necessitates showing their responsibility and not fulfilling the stereotype of dangerous Arab men.

Omar contrasted the limits of an "Arab demonstration" to something he had recently seen shared on a Facebook group in response to posters that had started to appear in Dresden and other cities at the time. The posters were produced by a far right organisation called *Ein Prozent* (One Percent), and were placed on tram stops, lampposts, on the sides of buildings and elsewhere. *Ein Prozent* is a slick, far right "citizens' initiative", what it terms on its website as "a professional resistance platform for German interests". It is headed by Philip Stein, a freelance author and publisher and markets itself as an organisation that enables the view of the bottom one percent to be heard by the top one percent through publicity and research.

Although it shares much of the same ideology as other far right groups, such as Pegida (Stein spoke at a Pegida rally in February 2017), it tends to be 'factual', relying on statistics to capture a panic about growing numbers of ethnic minorities. The posters put around Dresden told refugees in large Arabic text and smaller German text: "return to your homeland, your homeland needs you" (*arjʿau ila waṭanikum, waṭanikum biḥāja ilkum*/ *Kehrt nach Hause zurück – Eure Heimat braucht euch*). Omar asked me, enthusiastically, if I had seen the picture of a letter that was put up in response to the posters? He boasted that it was "powerful" (*qawiyya*). The picture showed an A4 piece of paper stuck below one of the *Ein Prozent* posters somewhere in Germany. The letter reads:

> Dear Mister ???,
>
> We are sorry to inform you that at this time we cannot return to our homeland as there is a war and there is a dictatorship. As soon as the war and the dictator have finished, we would like to return.
>
> If you are going to write something new in the next days, you do not need to write it in Arabic, since we have learnt and speak German.
>
> We would like to thank you in advance for your understanding.
>
> Best regards,

What makes the anonymous letter meaningful for Omar is the way that it appears to speak on behalf of refugees to a German public. The letter displays the power to speak up, resist, and answer back. Not only does it show conviction and strength but also, more importantly, it does so in measured terms, such as beginning the sentence "we are sorry to inform you" and ending by thanking the individual for their understanding. In contrast to the violent demonstration that threatens to turn Germans against Syrians, the letter shows a commitment among Syrians to democracy: "If you are going to write something new in the next days…", the author writes, displaying a readiness to engage the question of return openly and in the public sphere. The issue of language is also revealing, as the author refuses the premise that refugees do not

understand German, "you do not need to reply in Arabic" the letter reads. Significantly, in contrast to the "Arab demonstration", this dialogue with the exclusionary campaign of the far right offers a site for the performance of "responsible masculinity".

Responses to the far right by Syrian and Palestinian refugees could go beyond a letter shared with German passers-by and on social media, extending to mainstream coverage in national and international media. This was the case for a demonstration in Cottbus in Brandenburg, north of Saxony that was co-organised by a Syrian refugee, Basem Nour Al-dosh, and featured in *Zeit Online*, the online version of the *Die Zeit* newspaper which circulates to approximately 1.7 million people.

I had some insight into tensions in Cottbus when a talk I was supposed to deliver as part of a school's "integration day" in early 2017 was abruptly cancelled without explanation. The school was struggling with having two classes of men from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq and the day was an initiative to help address these challenges. Fast-forward one year to the 3rd of February 2018, Cottbus witnessed two opposing demonstrations in one day. In the morning was a demonstration called "Life without Hate" (*Leben ohne Hass*) co-organised by Al-Dosh, a 21-year-old Syrian living in Cottbus, as a response to weekly demonstrations by the far right against refugees in the city and growing intolerance and violence. On New Year's Eve 2017/18, for example, several men had attacked an asylum shelter in the city and in January 2018 the city refused to accept any more refugees. In the week prior to the demonstrations, six men were arrested for distributing flyers of the extremist NPD, as well as pepper spray. The counter-demonstration on the day was organised by *Zukunft Heimat* (Future Homeland), who also organised previous demonstrations against refugees in the city. Some in the movement called for all refugees to be removed from the city following a series of knife attacks by Syrian refugees. In January 2018, two Syrians stabbed a 16-year-old German boy and on a separate occasion three Syrian men are alleged to have threatened a German couple with a knife.

The *Zeit Online* article, "They all want to save Cottbus" (Kagermeier 2018), is a good example of the capacity of the far right to open up spaces for Syrians and Palestinians to perform responsible masculinity to the German public. Although it is unclear to what extent Al-Dosh and other organisers intended the demonstration to be picked up by national and international media, it is clear that it aimed to present refugees to a German audience in contrast to the negative discourse of the far right. Al-Dosh is quoted as saying in the article, "Today we want to calm the mood and show that not all Syrians are the same". It was also, significantly, about presenting refugees in contrast to the far right (and far left). When asked about the

demonstration by *Zukunft Heimat* in the afternoon, Al-Dosh replied, "That's democracy and it's good", and in response to suggestions of going to disturb the demonstration, he says "I do not want to disturb, [I] do not [want to] start a fight. That's why we are here.", and he is described as rolling out a "peace flag". Al-Dosh's comments are contrasted to the violence and authoritarianism of the far right, as shown by their open attack on the "lying press" during the speeches. The article quotes Anne Haberstroh, deputy chairman of *Zukunft Heimat*, who asks the rally, ironically, "Who among you belongs to the highly violent, right-wing extremist milieu that the press thinks will shape our demonstrations?" to which some members are reported to raise their hands.

For Al-Dosh and other organisers of *Leben ohne Hass*, responding to the far right entails a process of performing "responsible masculinity". The extent to which this becomes the terms of inclusion in Germany is reflected in the way the media account depicts Al-Dosh and participants of the demonstration as insiders, and the far right as outsiders. The pro-migrant demonstration is embodied in the figure of Dietrich Hallman, an elderly, dignified native of the city. The article begins, "The Syrians of Cottbus have invited him, and Dietrich Hallmann has come gladly. It is his city." It is through Hallmann that the article articulates the legitimacy and claim to belong of refugees themselves. In contrast, participants of the far right demonstration are presented as outsiders. Rather than the legitimacy associated with the aged figure of Dietrich Hallman, they are described as leaving the city at the end of the demonstration. To this extent, the demonstration shares with what Ingvars and Gislason (2018) describe for the sit-in protest organised by Syrians in Athens. Through the protest, Syrians presented an "emergent refugee masculinity" to the world and in doing so "male refugees could gain respect locally, regionally, and globally" and "challenge the media-led narratives of migrant criminality, immorality, and greed." (385) This was similarly the case for the demonstration organised by Al-dosh and shared by the media. In Germany, the capacity of refugees to present this image is afforded by the far right.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to the affordances of the far right as the site of discourses and performances of moral belonging in Germany for Syrian and Palestinian male refugees. In contrast to work that considers the emergence, policies and strategies of the far right, little to date explores the impact of a prominent and organised far right movement on people who are

victimised by it. In the context of Dresden, the capital of the far right in Germany, this chapter suggests that for my interlocutors the far right played a complex and varying role in their everyday lives. On the one hand, discrimination and harassment in everyday life could be the source of anxiety and feelings of unbelonging. As I have shown, the response to this was often to try to keep a low profile. Accounts of such victimisation often had an air of resignation as even expressions of resistance entailed fantasises about reversing power relations in an unlikely future scenario. This victimisation was in many respects seen as the result of widespread sympathy for the far right. However, there were considerable differences in responses to organised expressions of the far right, which could be the stage for narratives and displays of belonging in two quite distinct respects. First, as symbolic German "natives", they could determine a worthy, masculine self from unworthy others, and become the site for the display of insiderness. Second, the far right itself could be constructed as "abject Other" to the modern democratic German nation and its citizens, offering space for the display and performance of belonging to a German public. In the face of the far right, my interlocutors and others could imagine and perform horizontal solidarities and construct themselves as carriers of a liberal, democratic German tradition. Bock (2018) has argued that the breakdown of state institutions during the "refugee crisis" opened up a space for minorities to display themselves as "reliable citizens" in Germany. In a similar respect, the emergence of the far right has provided opportunities for male refugees, otherwise maligned and feared, to display "responsible masculinity". Rather than assuming the far right is always or consistently spelling bad news for migrants and minorities, this chapter suggests a more nuanced and differentiated picture where the organised far right offered affordances for belonging.

Chapter 5
Friendship as a Gift

One afternoon I was sitting with Tariq and Ali at their friend Mostafa's apartment after we had just helped him dismantle and move a bed that he had sold to someone online. I noticed that Tariq had been cold towards Ali, who was in his mid-thirties and, like Tariq, Palestinian from Syria, when he had asked him for help to fix his computer. Afterwards I asked Tariq what he thought of Ali. He said he doesn't like the way he tries to get something for nothing. "I once gave him shoes and told him he could keep them, but when I asked him to interpret for me, because he is an expert (shātir) *at German, he said he didn't have time. What?* (Shuw?) *Did you become European?"*

This brief anecdote about Tariq's disappointment with Ali reflects the expectations he has of his Arab friends and the importance of reciprocity in signifying this friendship; when Tariq lends Ali a pair of shoes, he expects his generosity to be reciprocated with help interpreting German. In the context of Dresden, same-sex friends could assume myriad important roles and functions and were the primary source of intimacy in contexts where most people came without family or relatives from Syria. The expectation that Ali assist Tariq in interpreting German at the Jobcenter is indicative of one such important role of friends in Dresden. What is significant about this exchange, however, is the way that Tariq makes sense of Ali's failure to perform proper friendship in relation to "Europeans". It is typically "European" for Ali to say that "he doesn't have time" to help him, and his conduct seems to be explicable only as a reflection of symbolically becoming European. In this chapter, I explore friendship and broader accounts and practices of "social life" (*hayāt l-ijtīmāʿī*) and how this became terms by which my

interlocutors expressed and performed dignity. In the particular context of Germany, I argue, these were the terms by which Syrians and Palestinians could assert moral superiority in relation to the host society, but at the same time carve out a space in which they had something to share with Germans. However, the chapter also shows that while friendship and social life take on particular ethical meaning for Syrians and Palestinians, they confront new kinds of tension as my interlocutors expressed uncertainty and mistrust of friends in the context of displacement.

There has traditionally been blindness to friendship among anthropologists as a result of a disciplinary preoccupation with kinship, in part because of the assumption that friendship did not exist in non-Western societies where kinship ruled (Paine 1969; Guichard 2014). One way that friendship has been explored in contexts of strong kinship structures has been to show how unrelated persons can symbolically become kin (Abu Lughod 1986). More recently, scholars have sought to explore the importance and implications of local distinctions between kinship and friendship (Desai & Killick 2010; Carsten 2000), as well as the varying roles performed by friends in diverse social contexts (Guichard 2014). With regard to migration, work has shown how it can produce conditions for the development of strong friendships (Grätz 2004) and the expansion of social networks (Hammond 2004). In the context of young asylum seekers in London, Wells has illustrated how young people produce new social networks in ways that contrast to perceptions and expectations of NGOs and officials (2011). As Hammond notes in the context of Ethiopian repatriates, "a group of people, finding themselves thrown together by their circumstances but sharing no other common personal history can develop close relationships" (2004, 11). Others have shown how displacement can lead to the breakdown of social relationships. Stevens describes in the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan, "the breakdown of community, family and friendships that accelerate the very human hardships of loneliness, boredom and depression" (2016, 60). Lokot argues, however, also in the case of Syrians in Jordan, that it is a mixed picture and there is evidence of social relations strengthening and weakening (2018).

In this chapter, I explore the place of friendship in the everyday lives of young male Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden. In the absence of family, relatives, neighbours and community, friends could play a number of important roles. This function of the role of being a good friend, neighbour or family member chimes with recent work that has explored what Inhorn terms "emergent masculinity" (2012) by showing the importance of "responsibility" and "care" as values for migrant men. I show, however, that this is not only something valued

for its own sake but becomes indicative of culturalised discourses of "Arabness" in Germany. Work has tended to explore strategies for producing dignity among displaced and migrant men through processes of hierarchisation and "comparative strategies of self" to stigmatised others in relation to virtues such as work ethic (Suerbaum 2016), autonomy (Purser 2009), authority (Moroşanu & Fox 2013), as well as education and cultural capital (Vandevoordt & Verschragen 2019; Sherman 2005). In this chapter, I explore how notions of friendship and sociality could take on this role. I situate this discourse in relation to mainstream German society in a process of what Goffman (1963) termed "reverse stigmatisation", in which stigmatised minorities project back stigma to the majority, high-status in society. While studies of reverse stigmatisation have tended to reveal processes of self-exclusion, boundaries and difference (Kusow 2004; Espiritu 2001; Suerbaum 2016), I explore its complex and divergent consequences. By foregrounding sociality, care and responsibility to others as sites of moral excellence, these virtues can also in certain contexts provide the means of carving out a space for Syrian men to contribute to values, practices and responsibilities that are perceived to have been lost and forgotten in German society. However, at the same time as friendship becomes a mark of Arabness and something to be "given" to the host society, the very conditions that construct it in these terms (their status as a stigmatised minority in Germany) produce new pressures and uncertainties. Friendships could become fraught with doubt and mistrust; friends could remain unknown, they could lie and be *"maṣlaḥjī"* (exploitative), and friendships could end abruptly.

Friendships in Displacement

Meeting friends on Prager Strasse, inviting friends for dinner, having a friend stay over for a week, two weeks, a month, helping a friend translate German, going with a friend to take a trip in his new car, bringing food to a friend in hospital, hanging out with a friend at the local supermarket, helping a friend move his things out of his apartment, pick up a new sofa, or sell something online; friendships were, for most of my interlocutors, a constant presence, commitment and the object of discussion and reflection. In contrast to work that has shown the deterioration of friendships in the context of displacement, most people I knew had a number of friends they would see on a daily basis. Many of these friendships emerged from the camp where people were initially placed, or social housing (*Sozialwohnung*) where people waited for decisions on their asylum cases. From then on they endured because most people remained in

the same region where their asylum application was processed. This context provided a space for a "cosmopolitan conviviality" (Achilli 2015a), where people mixed with others from different ethnic, faith and national backgrounds. I was struck, for example, by some friendships between people from very different backgrounds who met in the camp and social housing, such as Jamil and Laith, good friends who got to know each other when they shared a room at the camp and would regularly meet in Dresden to spend an evening drinking, smoking and listening to Arabic music. Jamil is married and in his mid-thirties, a former head of a school, Palestinian and Muslim. Laith is in his early twenties, a former hairdresser, Syrian and a Christian. They were two of a number of friends who considered their friendship as highly unlikely if they had met in Syria.

Friends were seen as relationships based on sentiment and the enjoyment of seeing each other, reflecting what has been noted as local conceptions of the difference between friendship and kinship (Desai & Killick 2010), as well as valorised for producing particular affective and emotional types of care work (Elliot 2016). This is reflected in the way that Omar, who is in his early twenties from eastern Syria, characterised his friendship to Faisal. He told me that he and Faisal had a "real friendship" (*ṣaḍāqa ḥaqīqī*), which he defined by the fact that they share everything. He tells Faisal about the European woman he likes, and Faisal tells him about applying to bring his family to Germany, reflecting what Wells (2011) has referred to as the importance of "self-disclosure" in friendships. In general, my interlocutors emphasised the importance of "seeing" each other (Obeid 2013), and this was often displayed through expressing regret about the time since they last met, in expressions such as "*waynak? ma mbayn*" (where are you? You're not around), or *"inta ma taṣalt fīnī"* (you haven't called me), or *"ana mishta'lak"* (I miss you). This could often take the form of accusations, and shares similarities to what Meneley describes as the way the invocation of anger (*zaʿl*) offered terms by which middle-class Yemeni women in Zabid sought to manipulate the actions of other women as well as display their love (1996, 146). Similar to Meneley's example, the response among my friends to such comments could be to share regret, deny accusations of being neglectful and reverse them back to the other person, or else run off a list of important and pressing obligations that made it impossible to be in touch.

The status of friendship as the site of affection, trust and sentiment, was reflected in the way that friends in the absence of family, relatives, a spouse, and wider community could take on roles that might not have been typical in Syria. Work has shown the importance of friendship groups for migrant men, such as among Afghan boys in Istanbul, where friendships are the

means of living in affordable rented accommodation, finding work, and providing safety from the risk of physical violence on the street (Bozok & Bozok 2019). In Dresden, friends took on several roles, including assisting when someone was sick. In the context of the stress and disorder of migration and leaving family and home, many of my friends had recurring ailments, such as loss of hair, inflamed skin, and painful joints. On one occasion, Tariq's friend was in hospital for several months with a serious illness, and I was struck by the kind of care that he and others provided him. They would deliver food, sit by his bed to provide him company, and even wheel him outside in order to momentarily "escape" from the hospital. In the absence of family and relatives there was a strong sense of responsibility and care which, in some instances, could have unanticipated consequences.

Omar seemed to continuously suffer from bouts of illness, including skin that would regularly become painful and inflamed. One time his skin flared up, but he was reluctant to see a doctor because he found the experience intimidating. Therefore, when his friend advised him to apply a particular lotion on his body that had worked well for him when he had similar symptoms, Omar duly followed his advice. Later that day, however, he suffered a dramatic reaction and had to rush to hospital. In his retelling of the story, he impersonated the breezy confidence of his friend whose advice he had followed and contrasted it with the kinds of care he remembered from his mother who he described as being better than any doctor at diagnosing sickness.

Friends also took on responsibilities such as lending money if someone's stipend ran out in order to help cover costs, or joining friends in negotiations with institutions, such as going to the Jobcenter. When the friend of one of my interlocutors passed away, it was the friendship group that made all the arrangements for burial in a Muslim cemetery in Berlin because the man's family was in Lebanon and they were unable to get a visa to come to Germany. Meanwhile, friends played a vital role in assuaging the threat and uncertainty of everyday life. Dresden was often a place that was experienced as unpredictable and dangerous in everyday life. This included obvious things such as avoiding the area around the football stadium when Dynamo Dresden played. But it was also less apparent aspects. A good example of this is when I joined Tariq and his three friends to go and buy a pair of Nike trainers from someone who he had been in touch with online through Ebay. As we approached the meeting spot outside an Aldi supermarket in Striesen, there was a woman waiting next to a car with the door open. When Talal sent a message, she seemed to look at her phone, and we were quite sure she was the person selling the trainers. She appeared to text on her phone and Talal

received a message asking if he was alone. When he replied that he had come with friends, the woman by the car promptly got in and drove away. It was a curious incident and it is impossible to know why she left, but for Tariq it was evidence that she was a "prostitute" because it was apparently quite common for people to use Ebay to solicit male refugees to pay for sex. Whether or not this was the case on this occasion is impossible to know, but it did seem to indicate the dangers and deceptions that beset everyday life in Germany and the role of friends in helping to offset such dangers.

An important aspect of friendship was sharing and reciprocity, reflecting the observation of Pitt-Rivers that friendship depends on speech and actions that are "reciprocated in like fashion" (2016, 448). This relationship was displayed most evidently in the sharing of food. In Syria, I was told, *shabāb* would spend time together in a *"qahwah",* a male-only café characterised by cheap tea and coffee and tables for playing cards, reflecting Kreil's observation in the context of Cairo of the important role of coffee shops as a setting of intimacy among men outside of the family (Kreil 2016). However, in Dresden, most socialising took place at people's apartments. This marked a shift from socialising patterns in Syria, reflecting a lack of alternative and comfortable spaces to relax in, the insecurity associated with going out late, but also because, unlike in Syria, people had their own apartments rather than living with family. Spending time at each other's homes was described as "comfortable" (*mūrīḥ*) and "easy" (*sahl*) because you could relax together away from others, and it was in this setting that there was the sharing of food. The function of sharing food as the site of friendship in Arab societies has been long recognised in idioms such as "salt and cereal" for friendship among Bedouin in the West Sahara (Abu Lughod 1986) and "salt and bread" among Azalis in Lebanon (Obeid 2013). In Dresden, preparing and sharing food could be described as turning friends into "brothers". This is what Khalil described when I talked to him about his experience of Ramadan in 2015 when he was still living in a camp. Like most people I met, Khalil described how Ramadan was not the same in Germany because of the absence of family. However, he had fond memories of preparing *iftar* dinners with friends in the camp when he and several others pooled their money together to buy food. He told me, "It was really nice; we prepared food together and cooked every night. We became like brothers during that month." The new practice of sharing the home among male migrants could also result in the bending and play of gender norms. This reflects what Marsden has described as the "ambiguous and performed" gender of traders in conducting hospitality, where they could assume "bursts of role-playing" (2016, 251). In Dresden, friends could play roles of husband and wife, in which a friend

cooking in the kitchen could be symbolically feminised by his housemate who would sit back and become "man of the house". A role that would be reversed later on when the same person would be expected to do the washing-up, prepare *ʿargileh* and make tea.

Friendships were therefore characterised by being single-sex and egalitarian, and relationships that were both centred on providing pleasure and enjoyment, as well as often considerable commitments and responsibilities that included assistance with financial issues, emotional support and practical help, such as in instances of sickness. It is difficult to draw comparisons with the kinds of friendship my interlocutors might have had in Syria, but it is reasonable to see friendships as changing in character, form and intensity. In certain obvious respects, friendships would seem to grow and develop; the pattern of visiting and cooking together was greater in Germany than in Syria because young men live alone, for instance. However, discourses about friendship in Germany would often highlight these patterns as indicative of "Arabness" rather than the particular experience of displacement, and this culturalised discourse would often be compared to "Europeans" who were seen to lack these kinds of relationships.

"Who are your better friends?"

"Philip, you have friends in the UK, and you have Arab friends here. Now tell me, who are your better friends? With whom is it more beautiful (*maʿ mīn aḥla*)?" I was asked these questions by Akram after an afternoon we spent together in Dresden in the late summer in 2017. We had met at the Palestinian shop, Al-Seba, in the centre of the city, and drank coffee at Starbucks before we walked to his apartment where Hamid joined us, Akram's closest friend. They are both from the same city in the north of Syria and met when Hamid moved to Dresden and someone put them in touch and Hamid spent several months sleeping on Akram's sofa as he slowly organised himself and found an apartment. We sat together and shared jokes as we watched videos together on YouTube in an easy-going atmosphere that was seen to define time spent together with friends. Akram's questions were one of a number of times I was asked about my friendships in the UK and whether my friendships were better with Arabs in Dresden. For Akram and others, there was little doubt about what the answer would or should be: Arab friendships were "more beautiful" (*ahla*).

Friendship could often be the site of a distinction between "Arabs" and "Europeans". As I showed at the beginning of the chapter with Tariq's reflections on Ali's lack of time to

assist him, if someone failed to enact certain expectations of friendship, such as not willing to be generous by giving time and resources, they could be censured as "being European". Arab friendships were often characterised as intimate, fun and spontaneous, in contrast to European friendships and sociality that were described as circumscribed, cold and formal. This could be referenced in relation to splitting the costs of things, only coming to visit for a short time, or making arrangements prior to seeing one another. I would be warned by friends, for example, that I should not be "German" when I tried to arrange a particular time to come to their apartment to visit.

This distinction was apparent in the way that Omar characterised "European gatherings" when he was invited to the party of a European friend. He came to my apartment a few days before and asked me whether people will be getting drunk and when he should give the gift, and he complained that he doesn't like "European kind of parties". Sometime after I finished my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to find out more about Omar's perceptions of different kinds of sociality. I was interested to know the meaning of an Arabic word I had noted down in a discussion with a friend about how the atmosphere of the *"qahwah"* in Syria differed to cafes in Germany. In his explanation of the word, Omar delved into the distinction between the sociality of Germans and Syrians/Arabs, and he was happy for me to quote his message in full. He told me,

> We don't go and sit and smoke *ʿargileh* and say "how are you, so-and-so? How are you, so-and-so?" (*kīfak fūlanī?*) "*Alhamdulillah*. I did this." No. We make fun of this and that (*munaskhar ʿala hād*). We shout (*munṣayyiḥ*). We swear (*mnsib*): "fuck your mum, fuck your mum". For example, we will go and see a football match. We will see Barcelona and Real Madrid. If they score, we will hit each other. Even when there is no football match, we go and sit and enjoy ourselves *(nqoud ntsalah)* and we swear, and we shout. The Germans go and they talk between themselves, "*Wie geht's dir?"* (How are you?) *"Was machst du?"* (What are you doing?) And these pointless (*mtbayikhā*) things. The Arabs they go and they swear, and they will see each other every day. The Germans don't see each other every day, so they say, "how are you?"

In his evocative description of the sociality he shared with his friends, he valorises "Arab" friendships as defined by intimacy, informality and fun. In contrast to Germans, he and his

friends are not constrained by formality, such as asking "How are you?", because they see each other every day. Instead, they make jokes and get absorbed by football and swear, shout and make fun of each other. Omar's account of swearing and jostling reflects an ideal of friendship shared by my interlocutors as the capacity to be rude to each other, including calling each other names, such as "donkey" (*jahash*), or "dog" (*kelb*). When someone did something or said something considered annoying, or teased the other person, it would be common to share threats or curses. These exchanges were often said with satisfaction and evidenced the quality and strength of the friendship, reflecting a similar pattern of sociality described by Osella and Osella in the case of single-sex friendships among young Keralans. They show how these friendships often subvert hierarchy and caste division; the "gangs" are the site of "tough joking and testing" which "reinforce egalitarian relations" (1998, 191). The significance of this kind of breakdown of barriers was reflected on one occasion when Akram asked whether I swear at and offend my friends in the UK. When I said I didn't, he replied, bluntly, "this means you are not really friends".

Arab friendships as the source of distinction to Germans could be reflected in discourses about hospitality. Scholars have shown hospitality's "sacred, ethical and aesthetic dimensions" (Marsden 2016) and the way it can become the site of national self-representation and distinction (Shryock 2004). Among the displaced it can serve as a metaphor for the power relations between host society and the displaced as guests, and the way these can be reversed through practices of hospitality (Vandevoordt 2017). Hospitality among my friends could be valorised for its "sacredness" and discussed as a system of rules, expectations and traditions - what should be served, when, and by whom. Omar, for example, was proud of the hospitality that was offered from his region and he would describe the importance of hospitality in his upbringing, such as his responsibility to serve coffee to his father's guests. However, more than a point of cultural prestige and the rights and responsibilities towards the "stranger", in the context of displacement he and others saw hospitality as an expression of the depth and quality of friendship. Omar once boasted that he could travel to any city in Germany and call a friend and be able to stay as long as he likes; this, he said pointedly, was not possible for Europeans. Hospitality was similarly a source of pride and boasting for Rami. He drew a distinction between himself and Germans after he met a Czech woman on a tram one day in Dresden. She had stopped Rami to ask for directions at one of the stations and he happened to be going the same way. Rami asked where she was staying in Dresden, and she said the name of a hotel. He was shocked that she wasn't staying at the house of the German friends she was visiting. He

told me, “even if you are their friend, they don’t let you stay at their house!” He told her that she could stay at his apartment for as long as she wanted, contrasting his capacity to offer hospitality to the apparent absence of a culture of hospitality between friends in Germany. Openness to friends and the rights of friends to be able to stay as long as they like was therefore a source of pride and distinction to Europeans.

The status of friendship was in fact part of a much broader set of assumptions and critique about social relationships in European society. My friends would contrast webs of relations of family, neighbourhood and community, *“hyat ilijtima’a”* (social life), between an idealised past in Syria and contemporary Germany. Adil is Shia and from a village in the north of Syria and came to Europe after harrowing years when his village was surrounded by ISIS. When I met Adil, he was coming to terms with another trauma: the risk of deportation to an eastern European country where his fingerprints had been registered. One day when I met Adil we discussed the difference between Germany and Syria, and the reasons why some people thought they could not live in Germany in the future. He explained,

> Here there is alcohol, in Syria there is alcohol. Here there are prostitutes, in Syria there are prostitutes. The difference [between Syria and Germany] is that Europeans are used to being alone. You will find, for example, everyone is alone. In Syria there isn’t this. If you live in a neighbourhood in Syria, you must know everyone in the neighbourhood. Arabs go and come together. For example, I live here and there are people who live next to me. I say hello, and go with them into their house, and if they have food, I will ask them for food. I will invite them to my house for food. If I want to go I will leave my son with them. This is not available in European society. Here is a house and here is a house and they will not know each other.

Adil describes the contrast between an idealised Syrian society where there is trust, community and people know each other, and Germany, where people “are used to being alone”. His account is striking for the distinction it draws between Germany and Syria. Surveying the small groups of people sitting together in the park, he said in Syria people wouldn’t be separated like this; in Syria, everyone would know each other.

The account from Adil reflects what Herzfeld has termed “structural nostalgia”, in which a “static image of an unspoiled and irrecoverable past often plays an important part in present actions” (Herzfeld 1997, 109). In Adil’s case, he contrasts what he sees in Dresden

with an image of serenity from pre-war Syria, before the village where he lived was encircled by ISIS militants that led to the death of many of his friends. This idealised image of sociality, community and trust was common among my friends. Laith, for example, would often describe memories of a rich communality in Syria, from huge wedding gatherings to sharing greetings while walking along the street. He told me once, "In Germany, if two people were to walk into each other in the street they will say *'entschuldigung'* (sorry) and keep walking. But in Syria they will say, *'afwan muʿlim! Hābīb il-qalb* (friend from the heart), come drink a glass of tea.'"

The discourse about friendship should therefore be situated in a much broader set of relationships that centred around an ideal of sociality and trust. Syrians and Palestinians saw themselves as carriers of the social world they grew up in, understood as part and parcel of "being Arab". Friendship, despite the ways it appears to have changed in Germany, was one manifestation of this social world and distinguished them from Germans.

Reverse Stigmatisation

The value attributed to male friendship and social life more broadly, and the way that this was valued as something "Arab" reflects its importance among Syrians and Palestinians in Dresden. At the same time, however, valorising friendships and the way it becomes an embodiment of cultural excellence should be situated in the context of displacement in Germany. What this points to is the way that ethics and notions of the good life are situated in particular political contexts. This is a point made by Didier Fassin, who has critiqued work in moral anthropology that separates the ethical from the political. He writes,

> the analyses of local moralities and ethical subjectivities have specified the moral and the ethical to the point that they often become somewhat separated from the political, as if norms and values could be separated from power relations, or sensibilities and emotions from collective histories. (Fassin 2012, 12)

In other words, ethical value is irreducible, yet, at the same time, cannot be removed from "power relations" and "collective histories". The discourse about friendship and social life was valued in and of itself among my friends, but its particular importance and its invocation as an object of "being Arab" in relation to Europeans should be situated in the context of Syrians suffering low-status in a society that is generally suspicious of young Arab refugee men. In the

context of Germany, it offered a discourse of oneself as a proper, dignified and accomplished person. This reflects the concept of "reverse stigmatisation", which has been defined by Killian, following Goffman's classic work on stigma management, as "the imputation of guilt and moral inferiority to the members of a dominant group on the basis of descent when the moral justification of the group's position of advantage is being redefined." (1985, 9) The characterisation of Europeans as having poor or non-existent social relationships reflects such "moral inferiority" and is a way of renegotiating the "position of advantage" of Europeans.

A good illustration of this is the context of Omar's invitation to a "European party", which he said he was sceptical about because Europeans "don't know how to have fun". A few days after that conversation, on the night of the party, he came to my apartment unannounced late in the evening clutching the gift he had bought his friend and told me that he had been to the party. He said he had left early because a friend of the host would not stay if he was there because he is Muslim. Although the host objected, Omar said he would leave because he didn't want to upset her friend by his presence. I was shocked and asked a flurry of questions, at which point Omar laughed and told me he made the story up. The reality was even worse, he said. His friend, the host, hadn't replied to his message about the party and now he wasn't invited at all! His story is striking because of the way that becoming uninvited provoked an account of exclusion on the basis of being Muslim. Despite being untrue, it reveals the risk of attending the party, reflecting the awareness and anxiety among Syrians and Palestinians of their stigmatisation in Germany. We can see his dismissive account of German sociality as serving to grapple with the terms of such stigma; he is stigmatised as a young, Arab male refugee in Germany, which he "reverses" through a valorisation of the excellence of a more genuine, "beautiful" and sophisticated sociality.

Another example illustrates further how accounts of social relations could serve as "reverse stigmatisation". I had been hanging out with Tariq when we met our friend, Talal, by chance on Prager Strasse and he invited us to his apartment. On the walk to his apartment we discussed the difficulty of earning a good wage in Germany. Talal said that what matters is to have a university degree in order to earn enough to buy a house. However, this shared expression of exclusion from professional occupations and high salaries was contrasted to an alternative interpretation that asserted dignity. Tariq explained that Europeans have to go to university and earn high salaries because they will not receive support from their parents. He asked me, rhetorically: "Is your dad going to give you money? Will he buy you a house? Will he give you a car? He will give you my dick!" In contrast, he said his father would buy him a

house. Talal agreed, explaining that he lived with his parents before coming to Germany. Tariq and Talal reversed the difference in opportunities to earn between Europeans and Arabs, and the status of work, to a distinction based on the quality of relations between members of family: Europeans *need* to go to university to earn money. This shares similarities to the moral critique of the distance between family members among the "elite" in the US by the "white working class" who see wealth as leading to moral deterioration (Williams 2017).

These discourses of reverse stigmatisation mirror what has been observed elsewhere. In the case of Filipino migrants in the US, for example, Espiritu writes: "When asked what sets Filipinos apart from other Americans, my respondents - of all ages and class backgrounds - repeatedly contrasted close-knit Filipino families to what they perceived to be the more impersonal quality of U.S. family relations." (2001, 421) Yet, I also think there is another important dimension to the function of making such a distinction between Arabs and Europeans. Espiritu has characterised reverse stigmatisation as "how the margins imagine and construct the mainstream in order to assert superiority over them" (Ibid, 416). In the case of my interlocutors in Dresden, this only goes so far in understanding the power and value of such discourses. The "beauty" of their friendships and sociality also generated a space in which to carve out a purpose and role in Germany, it gave them a "gift" to reciprocate.

Sociality as a Gift

Reverse stigmatisation among male migrants, or other forms of displacing stigma, such as through constructing hierarchies in relation to other stigmatised groups, can often centre on "hegemonic" masculine values of strength, autonomy and work ethic. Purser (2009) has shown how these values underpin hierarchising between Mexican men who find work on the street in San Francisco and those who find work through an organised centre for migrants. In Egypt, Syrian refugees have been shown to emphasise masculine traits such as productivity and an ethics of hard work to distinguish themselves from Egyptians (Suerbaum 2016). I heard similar notions of masculine hierarchising, such as friends who would contrast their work ethic to Germans. However, the capacity to be good friends, sons, neighbours, and even husbands, has very different implications. Rather than hegemonic masculine virtues of strength and autonomy, they invoke what Inhorn has characterised as "emergent masculinities", referring to what she identifies as "new patterns of masculine practice" (Inhorn & Naguib 2018, 3). This paradigm includes work on the value of love and loyalty in contexts of infertility (Inhorn 2012),

working class men's roles as providers in Cairo (Ghannam 2013; 2018), middle-class men's "responsibility" as husbands (Norbakk 2018), the importance of providing good food for families (Naguib 2015), and the virtue of being protective and nurturing fathers (Naguib 2018). The way my interlocutors boasted about sociality and responsibility to others foregrounds what this work draws attention to as the importance of "care" in the construction of masculinity. Asserting the distinction between Arabs and Europeans on the basis of such values, this discourse does more than producing difference, boundaries and superiority; it opens up space for something to be shared.

Suhail associated sociality and being embedded in family and community as constituting the "taste" or "flavour" of life, *"ṭʿam il-hayāt".* He first told me the term when we were sitting at a tram stop close to his apartment after a long morning at the orienteering course. Suhail and I were sat next to each other in the course in what was, as I described in Chapter 3, an often combative environment which provoked defensive and rigid constructions of difference between Arabs and Europeans. Three days in, Suhail had wanted to sit and talk to me about *"ṭʿam il-hayāt".* That day the course had descended into farce when there had been a discussion about marriage and the challenge men faced in meeting its costs. He said, as we sat by the tram stop, "Germans don't have *ṭʿam il-hayāt*; the society is *mufakak* (broken or split up)". He pointed to an elderly woman who was slowly crossing the road dragging a trolley bag behind her. "For example, why is she walking by herself? Why is no one helping her? Where is her family?" As was often the case among my interlocutors, he contrasted relationships between family members in Germany to Arabs. Particularly how in Germany it is normal for children to leave the house when they turn eighteen. I asked Suhail how this related to *"ṭʿam il-hayāt"*?

"People understand this differently", he replied diplomatically. For people in Germany this might be "living alone and drinking beer", but for him "It is about society. It isn't about being a single person and thinking about yourself."

The notion of society being "broken" was often invoked by my Syrian and Palestinian friends for describing the perceived weakness and fracture of community and family and implies change and the loss of social relationships that had once been shared. I was told by Bassem, for example, that if you went into the depths of the German countryside you would find a community that closely resembles Arab society, in which neighbourhoods are close-knit and families live in the same extended house. His point was that Germans had in the past shared what Arabs have today, but this had been lost in most places. This shares similarities to

discourses among converts to Islam in the UK in previous research I conducted. Joining a Muslim community could be described as forging a kind of communality that had once been a part of working-class British life. One woman described the intimacy and cooperation shared between neighbours in the past in her neighbourhood in Manchester and how she had recovered this through joining a mosque community (Rushworth 2016). Similarly, for Suhail and others, a discourse of society "being broken" served to convey what Germans had lost but also what could and should be recovered. I observed how Suhail enacted the role of good neighbour with two elderly Germans who lived opposite to him who would often sit together by the window next to his apartment. Although he didn't do anything for several months for fear of not being able to communicate effectively, eventually he was pleased to invite them for tea in his apartment. From that time onwards he made a point of offering them tea and biscuits and making conversation with them whenever they sat outside his apartment.

This was part of a pattern of practice of generosity and care among Syrians and Palestinians towards often elderly German neighbours. One of the reasons for this is that, like a number of my friends, many elderly people lived in social housing provided by the company Vonovia. Take the case of Latif, who is in his late thirties and a good friend of Rami. Latif lived on the fourth floor of a steps-only building in Gorbitz, an area of low-cost housing to the west of Dresden. He told me during a conversation one evening at Rami's apartment that society in Germany is "broken" and he cited the case of an elderly woman who lived next door, also on the fourth floor of the building. He told us, "I asked her once, 'how do you do everything? How do you buy things from the shop?' She said that she does everything by herself. It is 105 steps to get to our apartments", he said, in disbelief. "The woman has two children, but they don't come to see her. In 2 months, I haven't seen anyone come and visit her." He explained that he helps her. If he is going to the shop he will tell her he is going and ask if she needs anything. Everyone at Rami's apartment listened and shared their feelings of incredulity.

The potential of young, male Arab refugees to contribute to society through enacting values of community and family has been recognised by Germans, who have afforded opportunities for Syrians, in particular, to care for the elderly. Rohde-Abuba (2018) has explored how young refugees in Germany are the site of "positive othering" discourses that stress their suitability to do care work with the elderly: "a narrative of cultural suitability draws on the assumption of a value system that subordinates young Muslim men to their elders in the role of sons and grandsons." (2018, 11) Rohde-Abuba therefore shows how media, the state

and care-home managers imagine refugees as good care workers because of a perceived cultural predilection towards embeddedness in family and respect for the elderly. While Rhode-Abuba critiques such essentialising of Arab men and reveals how these discourses often elide the amount of free and low-paid work done by refugees in care homes, it is nonetheless striking that these discourses were shared by many Syrians and Palestinians I spoke to.

Sharing Arab sociality with Germans would often be described with satisfaction as processes of "them integrating with us". This might be said with a hint of irony at the sight of an Arab restaurant with lots of German guests, for example. It could also be invoked to describe Germans who were enacting norms of Arab sociality. I was first introduced to the way that sociality was something that could be shared with Germans when one of my friends, Mohammed, told me that he passed a school and had seen German and Arab boys fighting in the playground. He commented with delight that "Germans are integrating with Arabs!" The reason for this "integration" was that German boys were assumed to be calm and polite in contrast to the physical, boisterous and intimate sociality of Arab boys. Mohammed's observation draws attention to the way that this "Arab" mode of being together is something that produces "integration" of Germans to Arab norms. In reversing the terms of integration, dignity emerges from a site in which refugees coming to Germany have something to offer the host society. What this shows is that drawing attention to perceived differences in sociality was not just a stick to beat the host society and assert dignity through solidifying boundaries and difference, but also offered an opportunity to carve out a space of belonging for Syrians in Germany.

‘Figure 9 - “Flowers will benefit you”’. Cartoon image removed as copyright unknown.

The image above shows a “German” man who is unhappy and alone in a dark house compared to a “Syrian” man who is also depicted alone but by implication of the dozen kebabs he is grilling is preparing to entertain a number of guests or provide for his family. His home is glowing, and so is he: he is relaxed, content and well-fed. It is unclear where the cartoon comes from, but it seems it might have originally been an Iranian cartoon, and the image is available online without “Syrian” and “German” written under the windows. Nonetheless, the image was easily co-opted as a representation of Syrians in Germany, especially as the image of the man grilling kebabs is a culturally resonant image of time spent together with friends and family and the ability of a male head of household to provide (Naguib 2015). I was shown the image by Layla when I was visiting her and her husband Yasin one day. When Layla showed me the image she recounted a time when she and her family and another family were having a barbecue in a city in central Germany before they moved to Dresden. She said,

> Germans would come up to us and look like they wanted to get to know us and spend time with us. They were happy to be with people who were joking and having

> fun and sitting together eating good food. They don't have this. They should integrate with us! They would be happier if they did.

I showed the image to a number of my friends and they all thought it was a good representation of the way things are in Germany; their own sense of the good life - of good food, happiness and sociality - in contrast to the darkness and loneliness of the lives of Germans. Many of my friends would agree with Layla that "they don't have this", where having "this" was a source of pride and dignity and something that would be boasted about. But, as I have shown in this section, it was also something to be shared. As happened in the few barbecues I enjoyed with friends, passers-by often found themselves presented with a skewer of kebab as they walked past and were invited to join: the sociality of Syrians and Palestinians was a gift that could be given to Germans.

However, while friendship and sociality in the context of Germany were a source of pride and valorised as a gift to share, this same context could present new kinds of tension. Among friends, the conditions of displacement that enabled or necessitated strong friendships could be the same circumstances that served to create new kinds of uncertainty and doubts about the possibility to trust friends and the difficulty of really knowing one another. The idealisation of friendship that distinguished Arabs from Europeans sits uncomfortably with the time and effort spent doubting such friendships.

"It is everyone for themselves"

The term *maṣlaḥjī* tended to refer to someone who only wanted to see you when they needed something. This was a ubiquitous accusation and would come up constantly, though not always seriously, in the process by which my friends monitored each other's conduct. Accusing someone of being *maṣlaḥjī* could reflect a sense of the upset of the balance of reciprocity that Pitt-Rivers has described as underpinning friendship (2016). Take, for instance, a candid account from Tariq when he described his frustration with his close friend Amir. One day when I was with Tariq, Amir called, but in contrast to normal Tariq looked at his phone and then threw it to one side, saying *"zinikh"* (annoying, literally: rotten) out-loud with faint disgust, and ended the call. When Amir called again he ignored it. I asked why he had described Amir as annoying when I thought he was a close friend: "He is, but he is always asking for things!

He always calls me up and asks me to come with him to translate at short notice! Am I your father?" he complained. "It's stupid, and it is not normal (*mish a'di*)"

In the context of displacement, there was plenty of scope for a friend to ask for too much. Tariq's rebuttal, "Am I your father?", reflects the way that such demands and expectations began to take on the role of kin and exceed what he perceives as his responsibilities as a friend. The root of this frustration was related to a need specific to the context of Germany, which was Tariq's assistance to help interpret German. To this extent, being *maṣlaḥjī* and exceeding expectations of friendship was a challenge in Dresden.

The accusation of *maṣlaḥjī* was not restricted to friends who could ask for too much but was also often applied to people who were suspected of knowing you in order to take advantage. I was told about this when I was walking back with Laith and Jamil after a few hours spent drinking and talking by one of the lakes in Dresden. There was a man who recognised Laith and called out to him. They greeted each other and asked a few questions, and the man asked Laith for a cigarette. I was surprised, however, when Laith told him that he didn't have any. I asked him afterwards why he didn't want to give the man a cigarette, and he replied, "he is *maṣlaḥjī".* He explained that the man would only contact him when he wanted something from him, and he warned me to look out for *maṣlaḥjī* behaviour among my friends. In fact, I was often cautioned by friends about not falling into the trap of being *maṣlaḥjī* myself as I sought to navigate the needs of being a researcher with the expectations and norms of friendship. It was significant that the last parting advice I was given by Omar on my final night in Dresden was to keep in touch and not give people a reason to call me *maṣlaḥjī*.

What accusations of being *maṣlaḥjī* give expression to is a sense of mistrust which is certainly not restricted to the context of displacement. Mains (2013), for example, has written about friendship among young men in Jimma, Ethiopia. In a context of economic uncertainty and a society where friends are expected to share money and possessions, his interlocutors could be concerned about whether friends express genuine affection or self-interest. Indeed, the kinds of doubts and suspicions about friends can be seen as part and parcel of what constitutes intimacy itself. Kelly has shown how in court cases that seek to verify someone has suffered torture there is a close relationship between sympathy and suspicion; there is not only mistrust of the "Other", but also mistrust of the person who it is possible to relate to (2012). Among the Amazigh in the Atlas Mountains, mistrust "is rooted in the idea that familiarity is insufficient ground for trust", and that familiarity "cannot be used as a basis for generating expectations and predicting future behaviour" (Carey 2017, 9). This shows that mistrust is a

common aspect of friendship and social intimacy. However, what was described by my friends was something that was not part of a general condition of friendship but was rooted in displacement to Germany.

The particularity of the context of displacement is apparent in a remark that Omar made one day when he expressed his frustration with *shabāb* in Dresden. As we sat in the café where we would meet regularly to talk, he told me that if he was in his city he would confront all the *shabāb* here for "who they are". Here he puts up with their "lying" and "being *maṣlaḥjī*", but in his city he was very quick and good at working people out. He would tell people if they were being *maṣlaḥjī* "even if they are doing it maybe 1%!" Omar therefore drew a distinction between friendships in his city in Syria and in Dresden. He understood that his close friends lied and were *maṣlaḥjī* in Syria, and that such mistrust is a part of being friends, but he was able to recognise this. In Dresden he is unable to really know whether people are lying or being *maṣlaḥjī* because they are not people he knows in the same way. What Omar describes is distinct from seeing such mistrust as part of friendship and intimacy in the way described by Carey among the Amazigh. Rather, it is the condition of displacement and the impossibility of really knowing one another that creates new and uncontrollable forms of uncertainty. This shares with what Lokot (2018) has noted among Syrian refugees in Jordan. They described how in Syria friendships were based on knowledge about a person's family, but this was not the case in Jordan. In this setting, people "are faced with Syrians and Jordanians they do not know and whose families they are not familiar with, this makes forming new friendships difficult" (10).

Mistrust among friends could also be connected to structural uncertainty and insecurity about their future as refugees in Germany. We can see this in the case of Akram, for example. One day I was talking to Akram about applying for an *Ausbildung* and he told me his options in cities across Germany, one of which was Hamburg, which he said was his preferred option because this is where his cousin lives. In previous conversations he had given the impression of wanting to stay close to his friends Hamid and Khalil, so I asked him whether he would be happy to leave the friends he had made in Dresden. He dismissed my question as naïve: "Why would I stay for Khalil and Hamid?" he asked. "Would they stay for me? It is everyone for themselves!" (*kul wāḥid laḥālu*) In Akram's view, there was no expectation that he or his friends would consider remaining for each other because in the context of Germany everyone needed to look after their own interests. This can be seen to reflect what has often been recognised as the flexibility of friendship. Among male friends in Ethiopia, for example, it is

the “ambiguous nature” of friendship that distinguishes it from kin and from lovers, so while kin are always *“zemed”*, or “close ones”, “an individual’s status as a friend is rarely definitive and long-term.” (Mains 2013) At the same time, however, Akram’s insistence on “everyone for themselves” speaks to a more pressing uncertainty about friendship. This found expression in a separate discussion which I recount in Chapter 4 when I told Akram about confronting the head of the company that managed the building where I lived because she refused to accept a Syrian male refugee as a tenant. In response, Akram explained that I should not take the risk of being unable to terminate my rental agreement for a friend, who, because he is a refugee, could not be relied on, telling me: “If you lost all your money and you were sat by the side of the road, refugees would just walk past you. They would look at you and leave you.”

Akram’s warning about “refugees” expresses generalised mistrust as a result of the uncertainty of people’s condition in Germany. Akram’s notion of the “beauty” of friendship among Arabs I referenced earlier sits in tension with the uncertainty that comes with their circumstances in Germany. In his scepticism about “refugees”, Akram describes something slightly different to the notion of being *maṣlaḥjī*. I didn’t get the impression that this was a result of people seeking to instrumentalise friendships, but more the selfishness necessitated by the structural uncertainty and insecurity of being a refugee.

The nature of friendship in Dresden was reflected in the way that it was quite common for seemingly good friends to suddenly no longer talk to each other with no intention of getting back in touch. Alongside what this suggests of the underlying uncertainty of friendships among Syrians and Palestinians in Germany, it also reflects something broader about friendship in displacement. The ease with which people could stop talking to each other in Dresden is initially surprising considering the small size of the city and the relatively circumscribed spaces where Syrians tended to go, shop, study and hang out. However, in Dresden, friends were distributed in separate spaces throughout the city. Despite its small size, there was considerable isolation and it could be easy not to meet. On top of this, friends could often know each other on an individual basis and not as part of a group. Friends who met in the camp or in a language class might not share other close friends and therefore it was relatively easy to stop seeing each other. The consequence of these structural features is that it could be hard for tensions and mistrust to be contained or overcome.

Friendships would end, typically, when one person no longer returned calls or replied to messages. This was such a common and effective strategy that one friend, Khalid, used to jokingly threaten me and others that if we were to do something to upset him he would “press

block" and that would be it, we would not see him again. This was the experience of Ziad, a Palestinian asylum seeker from Lebanon who I knew well until, ironically, he stopped replying to my messages. He told me once about a friend of his, Bilal, who suddenly cut off all contact. Ziad and Bilal had come to know each other in the camp and they were very close, the evidence for this, he said, was that when Bilal's sister came to visit Dresden he had asked Ziad to help with arranging things and showing her around the city. His friend, however, stopped replying to messages. Ziad wrote and called several times and even put a flower in his post box. When I asked if this was a normal thing to do when a friend is not in contact, he explained that the normal thing is to put a flower outside someone's house but this was not possible at his friend's 16-story apartment block. On *Eid al-Adha*, he went to the apartment, rang the buzzer and wished him *"Eid Mubarak"* and said it was important "to be around people close to you". "What did he do? He said thank you and hung up." At this point Ziad accepted that Bilal did not want to be friends. However, months later, and the day before Ziad was telling me this story, he had been in touch again to say he was sorry. He told Ziad he is important to him and he would never want things to come between them. When Ziad went to his home to talk to him, Bilal explained that he thought it was important to walk the appropriate path *(tariq munāsib).* He had heard that Ziad was going to a *Kneipe* (pub) and hanging out with the wrong people. He was getting a bad reputation so Bilal decided to cut off contact. Ziad asked his friend: "Did I ever ask you to come with me?" Ziad explained to me that he would stay in touch for a short while in order to show Bilal that what he did was wrong, and then he will stop talking to him. I asked Ziad why he thought Bilal was getting in touch now and he replied that he wasn't sure, but he thought it might be because he is an optimistic person who can have a positive effect on people. "I can change the way people feel. In five minutes, I can make your mood positive or negative."

Ziad's account illustrates the tensions and uncertainty between friends, and how this could lead to the end of friendships. Bilal's decision to not want to be friends with Ziad reflects the difficulty of knowing people in Dresden because, despite their intimacy, the realisation of Ziad's bad reputation makes him question their friendship. In the context of the alienation of Syrians and Palestinians in the urban environment of Dresden this results in him cutting off all contact and makes it impossible for Ziad to see him; in another context, this kind of tension might not have resulted in such a dramatic foreclosure of their previously strong friendship. In the end, Ziad's friend does come around and spontaneously gets in touch, but Ziad suspects this is only so he can be *maṣlaḥjī*: his friend wanted Ziad's optimism.

Conclusion

Drawing attention to practices and discourses of friendship and sociality among Syrian and Palestinian men has shown how they were an important part of everyday life in the context of displacement. Friends, in particular, could take on diverse and manifold roles and expectations. In the specific context of Germany, where Syrians and Palestinians find themselves as a stigmatised group in society, their perception of the strength and "beauty" of friendship and sociability could become terms by which to compare themselves to Germans and a source of dignity. Almost all my friends expressed the sense that Germans lacked what Arabs had: joyful sociality and communality, or "the flavour of life". This discourse shares a lot with what scholars writing about minority communities in North America have described as "reverse stigmatisation", and this is certainly one aspect of the way my friends would boast about the difference between Arabs and Europeans. Yet this is only part of the explanation. What emerges as distinctive about the valorisation of friendship and sociability in contrast to Germans is the way that it embodies "emergent masculinity", reflecting a sense of responsibility and care to others. Discourses of German society as "broken" created an opportunity for Arab refugees to "fix" the society, which seemed to find its most common expression in being good neighbours and offering forms of care to elderly Germans who were perceived to be neglected by family and society. In this capacity, Syrians and Palestinians could carve out a space in which to assert a role; a space in which Germans "integrate with us". At the same time, however, these discourses reveal that the same context which helps to make social relationships a point of cultural distinction, a site of thick ethics, and one source of valorised distinction to Germans, also carries with it new kinds of uncertainty, mistrust and doubt.

Chapter 6
Political Activism and Un/Belonging

Muktar and I were sitting at a Turkish restaurant on Prager Strasse. Next to our table a giant television screen showed news in Turkish. It was the 26th of November, mid-way through the Syrian regime's offensive against rebel-held areas of Aleppo and the news reported that the region of Hanano had fallen. Muktar, who is in his early twenties, speaks Turkish and is from a town near Aleppo, did not seem interested. He steadfastly avoided looking at the television as though it was a trap. He stared at his phone while I, and the rest of the restaurant, were fixed on the footage.

During a B1 language class, Khalid, who is Palestinian from Syria, drew a heart with the flag of Palestine on it. In the break, he asked the teacher if she knew the history of Palestine and she said she did not know much. He played her a YouTube video of the history of the occupation of Palestine through a series of maps beginning in Ottoman times and ending with the expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied West Bank.

These brief vignettes capture a difference I noted among Syrian and Palestinian interlocutors in Dresden. There was a much greater tendency among Palestinians from Syria to engage political activism and raise awareness about Palestine and protest during tensions, as it was for Syrians to demonstrate around anti- (or pro-) Assad positions. This is despite the turbulent crises of the Syrian conflict, a period in which the Assad regime reversed losses and reclaimed power over large swathes of the country through often destructive bombing campaigns and even the deployment of chemical weapons. I noted a general tendency among Syrians to avoid

politics in public and to express cynicism about political activism; people who were adamantly anti-regime in private, such as Muktar, would mock and belittle anti-regime protestors. In this chapter, I explore the difference in responses to and practices of political activism between Syrians and Palestinians by exploring the perceived consequences of such activism in relation to citizenship and belonging in Germany.

Migrant political activism has tended to be associated with claims to improve the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in host societies, such as the *Sans Papieres* movement in Paris (Balibar 2000), Afghan protestors' claims for the right to third-country resettlement in Ankara, Turkey (Erensu 2016), or Palestinian claims for refugee status in Brazil (Moulin 2012). Interest has centred on protests and demonstrations that have sought to confront the immobilisation, marginalisation and limited rights offered to migrants in host societies. An influential concept in this regard is "acts of citizenship", which interprets such rights-claiming as not only "enacting" citizenship but also expanding the meaning of citizenship itself (Isin 2013). Scholars have also explored the impact of political activism in diaspora communities on homeland politics, including playing important roles in funding, perpetuating and ending conflict, as in the case of the Somali diaspora (Kleist 2008), and Turkish and Kurdish Germans in relation to Turkey (Vertovec 2005). This work has also drawn attention to how diasporic political activism not only relates to the homeland but the position of migrants in the host society (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). Al-Rasheed (1994), for example, shows how the transnational political activism of Arab and Assyrian Iraqis in London is closely connected to their different intentions to remain in the UK. Others have shown how such activism can have "integrative effects", as in the case of second-generation Somalis in the UK whose protests around remittance payments offered an opportunity to reframe representation of the Somali community in Britain (Liberatore 2018).

In this chapter, I contribute to this literature by exploring the political activism of Syrians and Palestinians in relation to their differential positions in Germany. There were instances of anti-regime political activism among Syrians in Germany, and there is evidence that Syrian refugees can be active in establishing civil society and diaspora organisations, such as the Citizens for Syria in Germany organisation set up in 2013 (Bekaj et al. 2018, 85). Nonetheless, many of my interlocutors remained aloof and even critiqued such activism as out of place, despite, in many cases, living the war in Syria in their everyday lives. To this extent I follow Kelly (2008) in asking not why people get involved in political activism, but why people choose not to get involved. By asking this question, I show how political participation

was problematised by many Syrians. In contrast to what I described in Chapter 4 as the potential for demonstrations against the far right to display "responsible masculinity" as terms by which to make a claim to belong in Germany, demonstrations against the regime were seen to assert victimhood and display "refugeeness" rather than their status as citizens-to-be. This was a very different picture for Palestinians from Syria, who are predominantly third-generation descendants of Palestinians displaced in the 1948 *Nakba* and who were refugees in Syria. For most of my Palestinian friends, activism was not seen as raising a tension between "refugeeness" and belonging, in part because conflict in Palestine was not the immediate source of displacement to Germany. However, while Palestinians could embrace political activism as an expression of Palestinian masculine identity and compatible with claims to belong in Germany, such activism carried potentially unsettling consequences as it generated suspicions and anxieties in Germany because of its association with anti-Semitism.

Comparing Syrian and Palestinian Activism

There were two demonstrations in Dresden in December 2016 to protest against the regime bombing of eastern Aleppo. On Wednesday, 14 December, I was told by a Syrian friend, Aarif, who had come to Germany on a student visa, that there was a demonstration just beginning outside Starbucks on Prager Strasse, situated next to the emerging "Arab Street". It seemed to be hastily arranged and Aarif only knew about it just before he called me. At its peak, there were approximately 350 people, as reported by the local newspaper *Dresden 24*, and protestors were clustered around a large plinth where a line of men stood and took it in turns to make speeches. People in the crowd were holding placards that said things like "Save Aleppo" in Arabic (*anqidhū Aleppo*), or "Aleppo bleeds and the world bleeds" in German (*Aleppo blutet und die Welt*), or "Save us" (*Rettet uns*). On one side of the protest there was a line of people who stood holding placards with photographs and statements about the conflict in German. People shouted out slogans and campaign statements in Arabic from opposition rallies in Syria, such as: "If you don't protest, you don't have honour", or "Fuck yourself Nasrullah" (the leader of Hezbollah). There were also chants in German from other sections of the crowd, including Aarif and other students, such as "*Stop den Krieg*" (stop the war), *"Bashar muss aus"* (Bashar must go) and *"Freiheit Aleppo"* (Freedom for Aleppo). The second demonstration, held the following Friday, was entirely in German and included a re-enactment of a scene of devastation: children maimed in a home that had been bombed with candles arranged to spell

Aleppo (see Figure 9). These were not large protests, and certainly nothing compared to the size of demonstrations in cities with a larger number of refugees, such as Berlin. Clearly, however, people did engage political activism in Germany to protest the war in Syria. A search on YouTube also reveals largely small protests in Germany during flashpoints of the war, including the bombing campaign of Eastern Ghouta in early 2018.

At the same time, however, many Syrians did not participate. I was surprised by the response of most of my interlocutors, who not only avoided the protest but expressed scepticism towards it. As Kelly (2008) writes in the context of people who did not participate in armed resistance in the Second Intifada in the Occupied West Bank, it is as important to understand why people do not participate as it is to understand why they do. What characterises responses to the demonstration was the perception that it was out of place in Germany and was even a threat to the future of Syrians in the country. Consider, for instance, Iyad, who is a doctor from Aleppo, and who I knew was anti-regime. He described a strong sense of indignation at the protest when I went to visit him the evening after the second demonstration. He asked about what happened and how many people attended, and then said dismissively that he didn't agree with it. "It is bringing the revolution here […] If they want to fight Assad then they should go back to Syria!" His opinion was shared by others, such as Omar from eastern Syria, who was against the regime and was one of the few people I knew who had the Syrian revolutionary flag on the wall of his apartment. He told me when we discussed refugees demonstrating in Germany, "If I wanted to do a demonstration here for Aleppo then I would go to Syria and kill Assad […] You are a refugee!"

In another discussion I had at the time of the demonstrations for Aleppo with Jamil, he adopted the tone of a detached observer to express his cynicism. Jamil is Palestinian from Syria and had spent some time living near Aleppo with his wife and children. Unlike Iyad or Omar, he presented himself as being neither pro- nor anti-regime, although he regretted the revolution and the chaos it had brought. I expected Jamil to be critical of the demonstration when I went to see him at the apartment of his friend Hisham, but what I found striking was the manner in which he expressed his cynicism. He took pleasure in the incongruity of the demonstration in Dresden. Sitting on the floor of Hisham's bare apartment, he asked with a sense of anticipation whether they shouted slogans of the opposition, such as *"īd ilnizam"* (the hand of the regime), and whether they called supporters of the regime "butchers" (*jazaryyn*), growling the words and adopting an angry facial expression. He told me that supporters of the regime will call the opposition "terrorists", and he seemed to enjoy firing insults at Hisham as he embodied the two

sides. He concluded, dismissively, “they think they are still in Syria.” He told us that the situation in Syria is “finished” in German (*fertig*), and it “has gone” (*rāḥt*). When he got up to go to the toilet, he put one hand in the air and said ironically, *“ḥurriya li-suria!”* (Freedom for Syria!)

Content removed: ‘Figure 10 - Candles spell out “Aleppo” during a demonstration on Prager Strasse (Photo by author, 2016)’

This reaction to the demonstration reflects a reluctance to engage with the conflict in Syria more generally. There was not a widespread determination to articulate wrongdoing by the regime, to share their victimisation, or rally Germans. Muktar’s refusal to register news of the bombing of Aleppo on the television in the Turkish restaurant on Prager Strasse is indicative of a more general reticence to engage politics in public. This was apparent during a discussion in an A2 German language class where there were Syrians from different regions, including Arab Sunni Muslims from across Syria, Christian brothers from Homs, and a Kurdish man from Aleppo. When the teacher told us that the next day’s topic would be about politics in Syria, I was curious about how the class would turn out, anticipating that it might lead to division. However, I experienced something similar to what Achilli (2015a) describes in the

way he expected his Palestinian interlocutors in Jordan to engage the political and was perplexed by its absence. The hour-long class discussion remained focussed on the intricacies of the political system in Syria and the closest the class came to censor the regime was a comment from Yasin, a middle-aged man whose son was presumed dead in a regime prison in Syria, that "when there are elections in Syria, Assad wins 99.9% of the vote".

The response of Syrians was in contrast to the activism of Palestinians in Germany. Like many Palestinians I knew from Syria, Palestine was an important part of Khalid's life in Germany and would find public expression. For instance, one weekend Khalid and I took a trip to Berlin to buy a new necklace with a map of historic Palestine from a shop on Sonnenallee, or "Arab Street", and to eat *knafeh*, a sweet pastry from Nablus in the Occupied West Bank. In his apartment, Khalid and his housemate had a small set of shelves that functioned as a space for physical objects from or associated with Palestine, which included glass bottles containing materials such as earth from Jerusalem collected by a German friend of Khalid's from the camp. Khalid would confront Germans about Palestine, such as when he saw a man walking with an Israeli flag in Dresden one day and he and his friends approached him to ask why he supported Israel. He told me they explained to the man politely that Israel is on land belonging to Palestinians, but then they were more forthright and he admitted the man was intimidated by him and his friends.

Opportunities to engage in activism were a feature of everyday life for many Palestinians. A Swedish man who hoped to walk from Sweden to Jerusalem to raise awareness for Palestine stayed a few nights in Dresden at the home of Talal, an active campaigner for Palestine. When I met him one evening, he told me he was welcomed like a "hero" at the Palestinian supermarket in Dresden and was offered food and greeted by staff and customers. As we sat and ate together, he invited us to come with him on the walk and join his mission to raise awareness about Palestine. Talal said that if he did not have his wife in Dresden he would definitely join him on the walk, and he was adamant that I should walk with him, telling me forcefully, "take your tent and go!"

Political activism could also find expression online, as was apparent in a conversation I had with Ali, a Palestinian from Syria. One day when I visited Laith's apartment, Ali was visiting for coffee and I noticed that he was wearing the same necklace as Khalid. He explained that he had in fact met Khalid after asking him about where he bought his necklace. Ali told us that earlier in the day he had seen a Facebook post about Palestine and something the Israeli army had done in a village whose name he didn't recognise. He went on Googlemaps to see

where the village was, but he couldn't find it. "Then I had an idea; I could take a picture of a Palestinian flag and stick it somewhere in Palestine", through the feature on Googlemaps that allows you to "stick" pictures to particular places. He subsequently scrolled to villages in Israel and added the Palestinian flag as an image, "It had never occurred to me before", he said.

Over the course of my fieldwork, there was a "gathering" (*ibtisām*) and a demonstration in response to crises in Palestine. The first *ibtisām* was organised by Talal and Ali in July 2017 in response to the Israeli decision to add metal detectors to the Haram Ash-Sharif. There was a white sheet laid on the floor with the map of Palestine displayed in sand, with pictures of al-Aqsa mosque placed around the map, as well as photographs of the eight men killed in protests. There was a second sign on the floor that declared: *"Jerusalem ist eine Arabische Stadt"* (Jerusalem is an Arab city). The gathering had a celebratory atmosphere, to mark the fact that metal detectors had not been added, and at one point a group of women attending the demonstration ululated, a mark of celebration at weddings. The second demonstration was organised by Talal in December 2017 in response to the decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. This was more frenetic and at around 4pm as many as two hundred people gathered outside the main train station, waving Palestinian flags and forming a chorus of protest against the US.

What is striking, however, is not the high level of participation of Palestinians in demonstrations, but the way people reflected on and talked about them. When I met Palestinian friends in the days after the *ibtisām* and demonstration, I would constantly be asked where I was and why I hadn't attended (I had plans on both days). After the first demonstration, I would tell them I was disappointed not to have come and they would reply "you missed out!", or "it was beautiful" (*kānat ḥilweh*). In contrast to the scepticism towards demonstrations for Syria among my Syrian friends, there was a sense of pride and the expression of enjoyment. I noticed that weeks after the first event Khalid and others had pictures developed from the day prominently positioned in their homes showing them at the demonstration holding Palestinian flags together with Palestinian friends. Of course, not all Palestinians were so enthusiastic about getting involved, but unlike Syrians, the issue was not that the protests were out of place but rather scepticism that it would make any difference.

Starting a New Life

The reluctance among Syrians to engage political activism contrasted to attitudes in private where it was common for my Syrian friends to invoke the war in Syria in everyday life. Memories of being in Syria could be triggered by the sound of an airplane passing above, or seeing a gun on display, or a range of objects, sounds or circumstances, or nothing at all. The following quote is from a "piece to camera" by Omar during fireworks on New Year's Eve 2017/18 to his friend who was recording with his phone on Augustusbrücke, a bridge in the centre of Dresden,

> God is Great, glory be to God, thanks to God the city of Dresden has been stormed (*iqtiḥān*) to support our vulnerable (*mustḍʿfyn*) brothers in Dresden; with God's permission we support our vulnerable brothers in Dresden.

In his broadcast, Omar draws association between the fireworks and the war in Syria and positions himself as part of the opposition to the regime in Syria (*muʿaraḍa*) who have stormed the city of Dresden to support their "vulnerable brothers". Omar would often invoke his memories of participating in demonstrations and rallies in 2012, describing the sense of solidarity, the mass of people and what they chanted. Although his city was late to join the protests, it had the honour of having "the longest demonstration", he said. In his accounts of the protests, Omar would embody their energy and optimism, repeating the chants in a low, deep voice, sharing videos from YouTube on his phone, and shifting in his chair at the café where we were talking. It was like the protests, which by this time had happened five years previously, had taken place yesterday.

The demonstrations and conflict could be lived in people's homes through television series, YouTube videos, social media and phone calls to friends and family living in Syria. This way of living the conflict online was a constant aspect of Muktar's everyday life, who would almost always have his phone set up on his sofa playing Syrian television series or news reports. One evening he showed me a video produced by the regime which showed planes attacking a city in Aleppo Province. He pointed to the soldiers in the video, saying: *"kelb"* (dog), *"kelb"* (dog), "they are from Hezbollah". When I asked how he knew this, he said it was the way they run, "a Syrian would never run like this". He laughed mockingly at propaganda footage of grateful citizens holding pictures of Bashar Assad and saying their thanks and gratefulness.

"Now I'll show you the opposite", he said, and he quickly brought up footage from a city besieged by the regime. The video showed interviews with children who talked about what they wanted to eat most. Phones relayed in real time the many sides and perspectives of the war in Syria and was the means by which people surrounded themselves with information as well as its past and present soundscapes and suffering (see Ingvars & Gislason 2018).

Syria and its politics would define people's relationships to one another in a number of ways in Dresden. The geography of the revolution and ensuing war could be used to "place" people, as was the case on one occasion when Suhail and I visited a friend of his who came from Suhail's hometown in eastern Syria. His friend had neighbours visiting after Friday prayer and as they introduced themselves to Suhail and said the regions they came from, Suhail would situate each individual according to the role their region had played in the revolution and war. Politics could also determine the boundaries of friendships. Muktar, for example, chose his friends according to what side of the divide they fell, whether pro- or anti-regime. He explained to me once, "if someone says one thing positive about Bashar, that would be it," he would not talk to them. He was clear that he would never be friends with someone who was Shia, who he said were always pro-regime. When one day we went to eat *manāqīsh* from the main Palestinian supermarket in Dresden, he wondered aloud after we left the shop whether the Lebanese man working at the oven, who he seemed to have a good relationship with, was Shia. Would it matter if he was, I asked? "Yes".

"But I thought you said in Syria people don't care about your religion?" I asked

"Before the war, it wasn't important. But now it is. It is important in Germany." He replied.

It was not always the case that people made such distinctions. Others among my friends would deliberately separate politics from people and could express the virtue of being able to engage in restrained discussion and disagreement. They would accuse people who refused to speak to someone on the other side of the divide as "small-minded".

Many of my Syrian friends therefore lived in the shadow of the war in Syria and were privately critical of the Assad regime, which raises the question as to why they were against political activism. I asked this question to Adil, someone I met a number of times on his trips to Dresden from a city in the west and had ambitions to become a journalist. He is Shia and came from Syria after harrowing experiences of being in a village surrounded by ISIS. Intrigued by his perspective, I took the opportunity one day while we sat in Alaunpark and did an interview to ask him about the reluctance of Syrians to engage in activism or talk openly about politics. He explained,

> People have different opinions and loyalties. If you start to talk openly about the situation in Syria someone will have a problem with you and you don't want to get into a conflict in Germany over this, so you don't talk about it. When people come to Germany they just want to forget and leave everything behind and start a new life here.

Adil's observation of Syrians wanting to avoid conflict can be seen in part as a reference to the literal risk of repression and retaliation from the regime. This is the point raised by Jörum in his explanation of the reluctance of Syrians in Sweden to engage in anti-regime activism. He questions the assumption that activists outside of the homeland can agitate "without having to fear its repression" (2015). He reports harassment of anti-regime activists by members of the Syrian embassy in Sweden, a point confirmed by Swedish Secret Services. Activists have also reported that members of their families in Syria suffer for their actions, including interrogation, being held hostage, and even murder. This was certainly an issue raised by some of my friends who described their fear of the regime's repressive surveillance. When I returned to Dresden in April 2019, for example, Muktar told me that if there was a vote in Germany about Assad in the future, there are people who will say they are going to vote against Assad but will then enter the voting booth and vote for him anyway because they fear the regime will find out. The gruesome murder in Hamburg of prominent anti-regime activist Mohamed Joune in January 2019 illustrates that such anxiety is not misplaced.

Adil's account, however, suggests something more than a fear of the consequences of activism. He describes not wanting to get embroiled in the conflict as part of a process of moving on; political activism, Adil says, could be an obstacle to "starting a new life". Yet I have shown that many of my friends lived in the shadow of the conflict in Syria and there is little evidence that people sought to "forget" about events, as Adil says. In fact, there was a strong moral discourse about not forgetting and moving on, and the suggestion of a clean break could be rebuked. My friends would often privately criticise others who they felt did not remember, reflect on, or who too emphatically insinuated their disinterest in Syria or return to Syria. However, while people did not generally seek to "forget" and "leave everything behind", there did seem to be a general sense that political activism was an obstacle to life in Germany. This reflects the attitude of people such as Iyad to the demonstration for Aleppo who complained that it risked "bringing the revolution here", or Jamil who said that protestors

"think they are still living in Syria". What this points to is the perceived implications of political activism on the position of Syrians in Germany.

Refusing the Refugee Label

The importance of Germany as the context for political activism was apparent during the demonstrations for Aleppo I attended. There were different views as to what extent the demonstrations should reflect norms from Syria and other Arab countries or be comprehensible to Germans. At one point, for example, there was a speech in Arabic about Iraq which upset Aarif, the person who invited me to the demonstration, because it was not about Aleppo and it was in Arabic, which meant it was incomprehensible to German observers. Indeed, there was pressure from many in the audience to use German, much to the dismay and confusion of attendees who were unable to speak the language. At one point this tension between an "Arab" or "German" demonstration seemed to be expressed when someone ironically shouted "*taqbīr!*" (to say *Allahu akbar*), while those around him laughed and told him to be quiet.

Concern for their representation to Germans reflects work that has shown how political activism among migrants, diasporas and minorities is negotiated in relation to belonging in the host society (Liberatore 2018; Portes *et al*. 1999). Østergaard-Nielsen, a leading scholar of diasporas and political activism who has worked on Kurdish and Turkish minorities in Germany, has summed up the important role of the host society on transnational political activism as follows,

> […] only the crudest analysis would ascribe homeland political orientation among migrants to the agency of the sending country only. Not only are such efforts often reactive rather than proactive, but the extent to which this falls on fertile ground also relates to the societal and political-institutional context in the receiving country. (2003, 767-768)

What is striking is that political activism for Syria was in many respects the source of legitimacy for the right to be in Germany. As Castaneda and Holmes note, Syrians were represented as "real" refugees in German media because they were "forced to flee by the ongoing civil war and the involvement in this war of its international protagonists, especially the United States and Russia." (2016, 15) Vollmer and Karakayali (2018) also note that there

was a surprisingly long period when common negative tropes of refugees and migrants were absent in representations of Syrians in the German press, reflecting the way that Syrians were at the head of what has been termed the "global meritocracy of suffering" (Bob 2002, 36). Furthermore, although Dresden could be a hostile and unsympathetic place for refugees because of its association with the far right, its history and status as a symbol of the brutality and destruction of war meant that the conflict in Syria resonated with local people. The relationship and tension between Dresden's history of destruction, Syria's destruction, and the inhospitality of the far right in the city was the subject of the film "Dresden Refuge", part of the project "Europa Transit".[6]

There was a general recognition among my friends that anti-regime activism was the source of broad sympathy and support among Germans. The installation of "Monument", three full-sized upturned buses to represent the defences of anti-regime forces in Aleppo, by artist Manaf Halbouni in the centre of Dresden in early 2017 is a good example of this (see Figure 10). The recognition associated with being a victim of the regime would be mobilised by Syrians in response to attempts to deny their right to claim asylum in Germany. For instance, in Chapter 4 I showed a letter that was written in reply to the sticker campaign telling refugees, in Arabic: "Return to your homeland because your homeland needs you." In the letter, the main explanation for not being able to return is that the regime is still in place. Invoking their status as victims of the Assad regime reflects the way that this was legible to Germans, who have an understanding of the war in Syria. Activism against the regime would seem to only court controversy with one segment of the population, the far right, who, my friends observed, wrote angry online comments on media coverage of demonstrations. However, the support and legibility of political activism to mainstream public opinion was an important part of what made it problematic for many Syrians. This is because activism could be seen to construct their victimisation and display their claim to be in Germany on the basis of their forced displacement rather than as citizens-to-be.

[6] This was part of projects for the Donostia/San Sebastián European Capital of Culture 2016.

Content removed: ‘Figure 11 - “Monument” by Manaf Halbouni in front of the Frauenkirche (Photo by author, 2017)’

This distinction between being in Germany as citizens and being in Germany as victims of the regime is reflected in Omar’s explanation to me during a visit to Dresden in April 2019 when we talked about the prospect of returning to Syria. In a conversation in his class at school, he was asked the meaning of “homeland” (*Heimat*). His answer, he told me, was that it is his family, friends, and freedom. What made Syria home for him when he left at the age of 17 was his neighbourhood (*ḥāra*), his school, his friends and his family. In Germany, he now has such a neighbourhood, new friends and school. In contrast, the claim to be in Germany on account of victimisation by the Assad regime was shallow and insubstantial, reducing being in Germany to a condition of displacement. Omar told me that when he is approached by someone and asked when he will return to Syria, he will say that there is a war, or Assad is still in power, otherwise he would return. In saying this, he explained, he wants to put the other person at ease, “you lie to them to make them feel more comfortable” because “someone will only ask you this question if they want you to return. It is impossible for someone who loves you to come up to you and ask when you will return.” Returning after the end of the conflict was not what Omar wanted and neglected all the reasons that made Germany his new “homeland”; it

was something he said to appease people who he perceived as wanting him to leave. Political activism can be seen as raising a similar tension by situating Germany as a site of temporary displacement from Syria.

This tension is further apparent in the following exchange between Omar and his cousin, Karim. I went to their apartment at the end of the siege against ISIS in their hometown by US and Kurdish forces in late 2017 and Omar was anxious and restless. For Omar, "liberating" his city from ISIS did not justify the means. He said his city "isn't just *Daesh* (ISIS)" and asked us rhetorically if the city belonged to ISIS or its people? At this point his cousin intervened and said he didn't want to talk about this topic: "It gives me a headache."
"What, and you think this doesn't affect you?" Omar shouted at him.
His cousin said they are in Germany and they have started their lives again. But Omar warned him that when ISIS was removed from their city, there was a risk that Germany would send them back.
Karim replied to him: "If you concentrate on your life. If you learn the language and you get work, then they will not return you. There are people who have been here 10, 15 years and they haven't gone back."

Omar and Karim's back and forth shows the uncertainty of victimisation in the claim to belong. Omar sees the destruction of their city and the power of Assad as portending conditions of their return to Syria because Germany would soon accept the legitimacy of the regime. He expresses the fragility and uncertainty of their status as "victims". In fact, Karim shares this sense of uncertainty and emphasises their claims to be in Germany on the basis of being productive citizens-to-be. What matters is to enact good citizenship by "concentrating on your life", learning the language, and finding work.

Throughout previous chapters I have drawn a link between masculinity and citizenship, in which masculine identity could offer terms for negotiating belonging in Germany (as well as presenting a barrier to such belonging). In Chapter 4, I showed how demonstrating against the far right could create a space in which refugee men displayed "responsible masculinity" to a watching German public. Others have noted how demonstrating during the Arab Spring could be the source of a valorised masculinity. Norbakk (2018) has described how participation of middle class men in the "youth revolution" in Cairo in 2011 that led to the downfall of President Hosni Mubarak served as "masculine capital" for men who otherwise found it impossible to gather the necessary financial capital to be able to marry. Demonstrating against the regime had a similar place for my interlocutors, who would often talk openly about their participation

with pride, such as the comments of Omar I described above. Demonstrating in Germany, in contrast, was not seen to accrue the same "masculine capital" because despite the possible repercussions it was seen as a pale imitation of the risks and sacrifices of anti-regime activists and members of rebel forces fighting in Syria. This is reflected in some of the quotes I mentioned above which challenge demonstrators to "go to Syria". Nor was participating in the demonstrations a means of showing commitment to democracy and their "responsibility" and their "strength" in Germany as the condition of belonging, as I suggest was the case for demonstrating against the far right. For my interlocutors, despite the fact that the conflict in Syria was legible to a German public, demonstrating and campaigning for Syria seemed to enact their status as temporary refugee-victims.

The result of this problematisation was the surprising condition in which demonstrating insincerely could become a marker of belonging in Germany. I introduced the chapter with Muktar's steadfast determination not to watch the news of Aleppo being bombed by the regime, despite having strong feelings against the regime. When I first heard about the protest for Aleppo taking place, I thought Muktar would want to get involved. I wrote to ask if he wanted to join, but I didn't get a response. When I saw him the next day at the school standing with Syrian friends, I was surprised when he asked flippantly whether there were any beautiful women at the demonstration, and said forthrightly that he would have gone to the demonstration to try to meet attractive Syrian women. Shortly afterwards we walked up the stairs to our classroom, and Yasin, who had attended the demonstration, was there. They stopped to talk to each other and Muktar described their conversation in the following terms,

> I told him that the people at the demonstration were just playing (*yalʿabu*). I said, "Aleppo has gone (*rāḥt*). It is in the hands of the regime. Will these people [the demonstrators] ever return? No. They were just *shabāb* chasing girls. They were just trying to have some excitement. In Berlin, there were thirty Syrians who were arrested for being drunk [at similar protests]."

Muktar seems to condemn *shabāb* at the demonstration for "playing", "chasing girls" and "getting drunk" and their insincerity is reflected in the fact that they will not return to Syria. Yet he seemed to actively cultivate this attitude himself, both in his comments after the first demonstration and to an even greater extent when we both attended the second demonstration. When we went to the demonstration he said he didn't want to stay long and he complained

constantly about the cold. He stayed close to the edge and laughed mockingly at the things being said by the speakers and afterwards talked at length about how he had tried to chat up women at the protest. What this seemed to suggest was his determination not to participate sincerely, and to embody the attitude of the *shabāb* he dismissed as "just wanting some excitement". Muktar's attitude shows that refusing to participate seriously becomes a means to address the implications of political activism as perceived by many Syrians: by demonstrating insincerely, Muktar refused a temporary refugee-victim identity and performed a claim to belong in Germany. In fact, later on in the discussion at the school above, Muktar distinguished the *shabāb* from Yasin, who he said did demonstrate sincerely. Yasin's participation was different precisely because his whole life had been in Syria and he was unable to move on. In contrast to the *shabāb* who performed insincerely and refused to engage the political, Yasin was in many respects a "typical" refugee, a victim of his displacement who could not or would not move on.

The relationship between political activism and terms of citizenship and belonging in Germany reflects what Achilli (2014) describes for Palestinians in al-Wihdat Camp in Jordan at the time of protests during the Arab Spring. Achilli's interlocutors share with my friends the way they dismissed such political activism. They describe pro-democracy protestors as "troublemakers" (*darawyn*), for example. For Achilli, such a refusal is a mechanism by which Palestinians manage to combine two conflicting loyalties: Palestinian nationalism and Jordanian citizenship. He writes,

> The difference between "enemy" and "friend" should be thought of as being intrinsic to Palestinian refugees' status. This distinction is played out in the tension between "refugee-ness" and "citizenship", between "Palestinian-ness" and "Jordanian-ness", and between the effort of living an ordinary life in the context of integration in Jordan and the nationalistic struggles of an exiled and marginalized community. (2014, 242)

In Germany, political activism similarly entails bringing forward a tension between citizenship and refugeeness, but the terms are quite different. For my interlocutors, such activism does not pit them against the state, in the way that protesting during the Arab Spring would have for Palestinians. Rather, it is about refusing the refugee slot, in which their legitimacy is a result of being refugee victims, rather than citizens-to-be. What the disavowal of political activism

among Syrians who have strong claims of grievance against the Assad regime achieves is to overcome their perception of the limitations of refugee identity in making a claim to citizenship. In similar terms to Achilli, at least part of the response seems to emerge from a strategy of "descent into the ordinary" (Das 2006). This is different to the circumstances of Palestinians in Germany.

"From an unknown Asian state"

For many of my Palestinian interlocutors, political activism was part and parcel of what it means to be Palestinian. The clearest expression of this was the way that people talked about attending demonstrations, where there was rarely hesitation about whether to attend or not, and there was the assumption that they would be present at the next one. In contrast to the scepticism among Syrians, there was a sense of pride and even enjoyment about attending demonstrations. When I spoke to Rami after the demonstration in December 2017 to protest moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, he described it as a social occasion; a gathering of friends with a "beautiful atmosphere". The demonstrations, despite strong feelings of resentment at events taking place, were part of a long tradition of campaigning for Palestine and memorialisation of dispossession from historic Palestine. This sense of attending as the expression of being Palestinian was reflected in the responses of friends when I apologised for not being able to attend the *ibtisām* (gathering) in June. They would tell me that it was a shame I couldn't come but there would be another opportunity to attend soon, reflecting the sense of continuous crisis and the inevitability of their own participation. The fact that people expressed the sense that such demonstrations for Palestine did not achieve anything was, in many respects, besides the point.

This would seem to reflect the observation of resistance as an essential aspect of Palestinian identity (Sayigh 1979; Jean-Klein 2001). Gabiam (2016), for example, has explored the importance of suffering, temporariness and refugeeness for Palestinians in camps in pre-war Syria, and there is a rich literature that shows the importance of notions of resistance to Palestinian masculine identity. As Achilli writes, scholars have explored the way that masculinity is linked to "irreducible resistance and independence" (2015, 264). This is perhaps most notable in Peteet's (1994) account of the way that beatings and detention in the Occupied West Bank were the site of masculine accomplishment during the First Intifada. However, other scholars have sought to question the extent to which this is always the case, showing that there

can often be negotiation, avoidance and uncertainty with respect to resistance. For instance, in Allan's account of Shatila camp in Lebanon, she writes of her surprise about how her "interlocutors were more willing to question - and even subvert - the nationalist doxa of perseverance and resistance, than to adhere to it dutifully regardless of where it was taking them" (2013, 2; see also Barbosa 2018). This work therefore invites us to go further than situating Palestinian political activism as being intrinsically about a Palestinian *condition* of "resistance" and "steadfastness" and to situate activism in its context.

Palestine as a cause for Palestinians was seen to have very different implications compared to Syria for Syrians in Germany. While political activism for Syrians was seen as an expression of their displacement and the terms of their being in Germany, for Palestinians, activism was situated in broader claims about historic injustice that is deeply embedded in Palestinian identity (Suleiman 2016). This far-reaching and moral dimension of the Palestinian question is reflected in how Talal described the demonstration he was organising to protest against the moving of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in December 2017. He was confident there would be a high turn-out of people because Palestine is different to any other issue, "it is only Palestine that makes people from different Arab countries meet together and work together." While we talked, his friend was putting up posters in Arabic supermarkets inviting "everyone who has solidarity with Palestine" to join the demonstration (see Figure 12). The issue of Palestine was seen by Talal as having a timeless dimension. When I asked if he ever worried that people would get tired of campaigning for Palestine, he said "it is impossible to get tired of demonstrating for Palestine. How long has it been now? 70 years?" In contrast to Syrians, therefore, activism entailed for Palestinians a different bundle of associations than the immediate condition of displacement and the symbolic assertion of their victimhood and otherness and desire to return.

This difference found expression in the pragmatic distinction between Palestinians and Syrians and the relationship to return. For Syrians, Syria was present as a site of deportation, even as it was the basis of the right to be in Germany. This was even more the case for Iraqis who often struggled to get asylum in Germany. In contrast, Palestine for Palestinians was situated differently. It was often remarked by Palestinians and non-Palestinians alike that it was impossible they could ever be "returned" to Syria, Palestine, or anywhere else because they were not recognised as having a state to return to. Their ID cards had "XXXX" written on it in the space for their nationality. In the case of Palestinian asylum seekers, such as people from Gaza, or Lebanon, they had "From an unknown Asian state".

Figure 12 - Publicity for the demonstration against moving the US embassy to Jerusalem. The heading reads, "Anger for Jerusalem".

In fact, the possibility of "return" to Palestine was not seen as being in tension to belonging in German; for many of my friends, migration to Germany and gaining citizenship could be conceptualised as offering the best chance of "return". Consider the following conversation when I went to visit Talal and we called his friend living in a city in the west of Germany who is also Palestinian from Syria. His friend was surprised that I was speaking Arabic and I explained that I had been studying Arabic recently in Ramallah. He replied: *"waḥid Allah! Ar-raj'a la Ramallah!"* (One God! Return to Ramallah!) I asked if he misses Syria. He said he missed his mother but nothing else, "We were very tired from our life in Syria."

In general, do Palestinians miss Syria? I asked.

He explained: "There are people who can get nationality in Germany, and then return to Palestine. If we stayed in Syria a thousand years we would never be able to return. Because of this Palestinians don't want to go back to Syria."

There is a difference therefore that while political activism for Syrians was felt to raise tension between their status in Germany as temporary refugee-victims, and worthy citizens-to-be, this was not the case for Palestinians. Palestinian activism did not enact their refugee-ness in the same way as Syrians because it was not the cause of their present displacement. As Talal's friend expressed, activism in Germany was in many respects concomitant with a claim to be in Germany, as it was through becoming German that Palestinians could gain the possibility of return to Palestine, a point also noted by Allan (2014) in the discourse of Palestinians in Lebanon wanting to migrate to Europe.

Palestinian activism was differently situated for Palestinians compared to Syrians for a number of reasons. While activism for Palestinians was part of a long tradition, for Syrians it was contentious and liable to fracture. The scale of the violence in Syria (in which Palestinians have suffered enormously, such as the destruction of Yarmouk Camp) also contrasts to the ebb and flow of crises and violence in Palestine, and there is a difference in the level of risk associated with such activism in Germany in terms of the threat to Syrians of retaliation by the Assad regime. At the same time, it is important to situate political activism in the here and now and the location of Palestinians and Syrians in Germany. What encourages Khalid to bring up the question of Palestine in language classes, and makes Syrians avoid the topic, is tied up with its associations and implications as refugees in Germany. While for Syrians it seems to produce exclusion, and the conditionality of their belonging, Palestine for Palestinians represents something quite different. There is therefore the opposite of the "descent into the ordinary". Rather than taking activism for granted as part of the condition of being young Palestinian men, this analysis attempts to show how the context of Germany facilitates activism as virtuous for Palestinians, and as important in the forging of a refugee male identity. However, this produces its own tension as campaigning for Palestine as young, Arab men, could bring with it accusations of anti-Semitism.

Tensions between Being Palestinian and German Citizenship

Enacting Palestinian political activism could pit Palestinians against public opinion in Germany. Khalid shared a number of instances in which he experienced scepticism, suspicion, or a refusal to engage with the question of Palestine among Germans he met. For instance, he told me one afternoon about a conversation he had with his language teacher about Palestine, this time in his B2 class, when he had been the first one to arrive. Unlike in the example I gave

at the beginning of the chapter, this time it was the teacher who initiated the topic. She asked him, he said, putting on a prying voice, "So what is the problem between Palestinians and Jews then?" He explained, "It was a really strange thing to ask!" He replied to her, "There are no problems between Palestinians and Jews. There are problems between Israelis and Palestinians." He told me he knew she was asking to see if he would say something against Jews, "but I caught her" (*kamashta*), and he simulated moving his hand to catch something in the air. He told me that he turned the question on her, asking her why she did not know the history of Palestine when she teaches politics.

Activism for Palestine was liable to lead to accusations of anti-Semitism in Germany, especially at a time when there is mounting concern about high levels of anti-Semitism among Muslims in Europe (Witte & Beck 2018), including evidence to support such claims. A 2018 report, for example, noted that 42% of "young Muslims with an Arab background" in Germany had anti-Semitic views compared to 25% in the population more broadly (Feldman 2018). Fears of anti-Semitism among Muslims in Germany is not new. In 2002 and 2003, for example, the German Ministry of the Family commissioned the Center for Democratic Culture based in Berlin to prepare a report about "anti-Semitism, homophobia, and gender discrimination among Muslim immigrants" (Özyürek 2016, 44). However, there has been growing alarm in recent years, particularly as a result of the "refugee crisis" and the arrival of predominantly young Muslim men. In April 2018, for example, Angela Merkel described "a new phenomenon" as refugees "bring another form of anti-Semitism into the country" (Witte & Beck 2018). Özyürek has shown how anti-Semitism among Muslims in Germany is often understood according to an "import-export theory", the belief that Europeans have historically exported anti-Semitism to Turks and Arabs, but while Europeans themselves have overcome anti-Semitic ideology, Muslims have not and require intervention from the state. Such a notion of "Muslim anti-Semitism" characterises "Muslims as immoral perpetrators and excludes them from the fold of the ethically normative European/German community." (2016, 61) The way Palestinian activism could prompt fears of anti-Semitism was most manifest during demonstrations across Germany against the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem in December 2017 which resulted in what might be termed a moral panic in response to burning Israeli flags close to Brandenburg Gate and the Holocaust memorial.

Khalid was aware but generally unphased by this tension. This was apparent in a conversation at my apartment one day when he was looking online for a Palestinian T-shirt to wear and was interested in buying one which showed the Israeli flag on fire. This happened

before the demonstrations in December 2017, but it was nonetheless apparent that it would be provocative. When I asked if he was serious about buying and wearing the T-shirt in Germany, he said he was because he has "*Meinungsfreiheit*", or freedom of speech. I could often be surprised by the lack of awareness or concern among my interlocutors of the implications of certain actions, such as intimidating Israeli tourists. This could happen when we were sitting at Starbucks and the person I was with might recognise someone as Israeli and call out Arabic swear words used by Israelis, such as *"sharamuṭa"* (whore), or something similar, at a volume they may or may not hear, and there would be satisfaction if someone discerned a change of behaviour, such as a lowering of voices. In general, there were broadly-shared anti-Semitic tropes, including Jewish control of big business, the media and the weapons industry, reflecting the high-prevalence of such tropes in the Middle East more generally (Rabo 2014; De Poli 2014). This could include perceptions of Jews as "clever" and good people to know. When someone needed a lawyer, for example, he could be recommended to find a Jewish lawyer.

Some Palestinians were at great pains to make a distinction between Jews and Israelis. I introduced Talal as the organiser of the protests and one of the most politically active Palestinians I knew. The way his rap songs promote dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, at least in the songs he performed to German audiences, made him popular in Dresden and he was often invited to events and to speak to local media. After performing one day, I asked him why he sings about peace. He told me, "Arabs are stupid because they do not distinguish between Jews and Israelis. I am not for peace with Israel, I am for peace with Jews." Later at his apartment, he explained:

> Here the majority of people are scared of talking about Palestine, because of Hitler. But people do talk. They say they are with Palestine, but in the path of peace. I have a lot of songs against Israel. Here, they respect your opinion.

Talal did not identify a tension between Palestinian activism and German public attitudes when there was a distinction between Jews and Israelis. However, a little later in the conversation it seemed a bit more complicated than he suggested. He played me a song where he lambasts the killing of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers. I asked if he plays this song at events with Germans and he said he doesn't. It would seem therefore that he was careful about how he represented himself to Germans. This care was reflected in demonstrations he organised, where he worked hard to avoid situations that could prompt outrage, like the burning of Israeli flags. I visited

him a few days before the protest he organised for Jerusalem in December 2017 that I described above and he told me about the precautions he was taking in making a decision about who to invite to speak.

It is ironic that while Palestinians often did not perceive a tension between political activism and claims to belong in Germany it could become the site of such tension. Political activism could have the effect, in some senses, of turning Palestinians into Syrians - in terms of their perceived "deportability". One striking example of this was what Khalid told me about the remarks of police who attended the demonstration against the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem in December 2017. In light of the controversy of burning flags in Berlin, the police warned protestors at the beginning that "if you burn flags, you will be sent back to Syria". Through their political activism for Palestine, Palestinians could therefore find themselves confronted by the threat of deportation to Syria. Another observation about flag burning at Palestinian demonstrations similarly suggests the way that activism for Palestine could serve to produce uncertainty and exclusion for Palestinians. The day before the demonstration against the moving of the embassy, I had asked Suhail if he was planning to attend. He joked about whether protestors would burn Israeli flags and shook his head saying he had heard that police in Germany were using video cameras to catch anyone who burns flags at the protests. "It is just like in Syria", he said, referring to how the regime would film protestors and catch them afterwards. Demonstrating for Palestine could have the effect of pitting Palestinians against the state, like Syrian protestors during the Arab Spring.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored political activism or lack thereof among Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden. Syrians tended to see political activism as out of place in Germany, despite often strong anti-regime sentiments. Palestinians, on the other hand, were often more committed to political activism for Palestine and did not problematise it to the same extent. There are a host of reasons why my friends would or would not engage in political activism in the context of displacement, including the perceived risk of such actions for their safety and the safety of their family or relatives in Syria. I have drawn attention to the relationship between political activism and inclusion and belonging in Germany. Literature has tended to show how political activism can be the site of masculine identity as well as the expression of "citizenship" in the form of "rights claiming". In the context of Syrian refugees in Dresden, however, neither of these seem

to be the case. In contrast to the capacity for activism to enact "responsible masculinity" when in opposition to the far right, as I showed in Chapter 4, in the context of activism against the Assad regime it was seen to produce one's identity as forcibly displaced and to "become refugees". Many of my Syrian interlocutors therefore sought to "descend into the ordinary" and avoid such activism. This was markedly different to Palestinians from Syria. Rather than seeing activism as part of an intrinsic condition of "being Palestinian", I show how this reflects the way that such activism was situated differently for Palestinians than Syrians, whereby the question of Palestine was not seen as producing "refugeeness" and exclusion in Germany. Being Palestinian and becoming German could be seen as closely intertwined, and the masculine virtue of such activism was therefore not problematised. However, while there was generally considerable empathy among Germans towards Syrian anti-regime activism, this is less the case for Palestinians, whose activism could provoke fears of anti-Semitism and, with it, the limits to belonging in Germany.

Conclusion

In 2016-17, the dust had yet to settle for many of the Syrians and Palestinians I got to know who were coming to terms with their new status in German society and plotting pathways for the future. What emerges from this thesis is the way that in this period of flux, of finding somewhere to live, learning German, making new friends, learning the rules of bureaucracy, and so on, there was a powerful imperative for Syrians and Palestinians to grapple with their new identity as refugee men in a society that had become ambivalent towards refugees, and a city that embodied this ambivalence. In this context, Syrian and Palestinian men's everyday lives as refugees in Dresden sought to communicate and enact their dignity as men worthy of belonging in German society. What I have explored is the complex, lived experience of such attempts.

This thesis is part of a growing body of ethnographic work that investigates the experiences of displaced men. Until recently, men have tended to be an "unmarked category" in studies of displacement which have focussed on the category of *"womenandchild"* (Jaji 2009). This growing attention has revealed the risks of a loss of status and purpose for forced displaced men (Pasura 2008; Kabachnik et al. 2013). Alongside the recognition that some men can confront considerable gender-specific challenges in displacement, work has also sought to develop a more complex and rounded pictures of male migrants, moving beyond what Inhorn has characterised as the "hackneyed trope" of a "crisis of masculinity", to consider the resourcefulness and resilience of masculine identity in displacement. This has revealed evidence of the ways male refugees seek to establish dignity as men and "unbecome refugees" (Suerbaum 2017).

This thesis contributes to the growing interest in drawing out the gendered experiences of male migrants but goes beyond a focus on the consequences of displacement on masculine identity. Rather, it has situated strategies to fulfil expectations of masculine maturity in the process of negotiating belonging and inclusion in Germany, a context where young male Muslim migrants are marked by their ethnicity, age, religion and gender as already a problem. Among Syrian refugees in Athens, Ingvars and Gislason (2018) have explored the intersection of gender with a political claim. In their study, young leftist Syrian male migrants displayed their "responsibility" in arranging a sit-in protest to contest being denied the right to migrate further into Europe. This reflects what they characterise as a "new refugee masculinity", in which masculinity is turned from something that marks them as threatening and dangerous, into something that reflects their "democratic sensibility" and worthiness as citizens. Inhorn and Isidoros, reflecting on this study, have described how this reveals "attempts by Syrians to communicate a very different idea of what it means to be a refugee man" (2018, 7). In many respects, this study takes up a similar question of exploring the relationship between gender and a political claim, in this case in the process by which Syrian refugees position themselves as worthy citizens with a claim to belong. However, in contrast to the successful sit-in protest in Athens and the realisation and display of the "responsible" refugee man, this study has shown a much more fragmented, complex and uncertain picture as it emerges in the sites and settings of everyday life in Germany. It shows that there is constant attention to communicate a dignified identity as male refugees who contribute to, belong in, and even protect the nation and its values. Yet this can also be in tension; masculine identity and claims to citizenship could find mutual expression or conflict with one another.

At times, emic notions of masculine self-realisation were concomitant with positioning oneself as a worthy citizen. Fulfilling the terms of neoliberal citizenship, in which the capacity to earn represents a claim to citizenship, is compatible with masculine identity centred on being productive, self-sufficient, and the breadwinner. The virtue of being "caring" men with "beautiful" sociality emerges both as a reflection of proper, moral masculinity, as well as a "gift" to offer the host society; a form of reciprocity that offers respectability and value as equal citizens rather than the moral subordination of refugees as recipients. Similarly, the far right opens up space for the display of "responsible masculinity" and the claim to belong in Germany. In other instances, however, and as a result of the way that diverse Syrian and Palestinian men are situated differently in Germany, forging a masculine identity could seem to be in tension with positioning themselves as future citizens. Labour market integration

policies that were seen as providing the terms for self-realisation and inclusion for some looking to enter white collar and skilled blue collar jobs, were experienced as exclusionary by others looking for lower-skilled blue collar work, or aspiring traders and small business owners. In some cases, masculine expression was achieved through rejecting terms of belonging, as in the performance of patriarchal norms in response to the "integration imperative". There could also be the opposite situation, where demonstrating and being politically active, often associated with masculine virtue, was refused by Syrians who sought to distance themselves from its association with victimhood and refugeeness, and therefore circumscribed inclusion in Germany.

What emerges is not the accomplishment of a "new" masculinity that marks male refugees as responsible and worthy men to the German public, in the way described for Syrian refugees in Athens by Ingvars and Gislason. Neither, however, did my interlocutors conform to what Jansen has termed "misplaced masculinity", in which the pursuit of masculine recognition is *out of place* (2008). It is more accurate to characterise Syrian and Palestinian men in Dresden as vacillating between two poles, in which masculine "respectability" could mark them as belonging in Germany as insiders, but also, in other instances, be at odds with these terms. In some cases, this could manifest in unexpected ways. Palestinians who saw political activism as worthy could risk being labelled as anti-Semites by mainstream public opinion. Distancing oneself from welfare has been shown as terms by which to masculinise by displaying autonomy and self-sufficiency as well as conforming to a neoliberal citizenship regime, but this could be turned on its head in Dresden where receiving welfare could in the narratives of some of my interlocutors be the setting for masculine strategies of risk and resilience, as well as entailing "claims-making" that articulated citizenship. Far from being a neat and tidy picture, the relationship between gender identity and citizenship could manifest in diverse ways for my interlocutors. It is also a picture that will change and evolve over time as Syrians and Palestinians are no longer newcomers. It is worth ending therefore by reflecting on possible questions for future research.

Future Directions of Study

It quickly became apparent when I returned to visit Dresden in 2019 to what extent the findings of this thesis represent for many of my interlocutors a specific moment in time – an instance in which there were attempts to fashion new kinds of future in a time of uncertainty. For some,

there were marked personal changes, such as the arrival of a wife and children from Syria through family reunification that could prompt a shift, overnight, from the lifestyle of a *shab* (young man) to that of a husband and father. The particular conditions I follow in this thesis, as newly-recognised refugees whose everyday lives were shaped by an integration agenda, had changed dramatically for many who were no longer attending language classes or being summoned regularly to the Jobcenter. During my fieldwork there had been a lot of talk about the future, about what needed to be done by when, and attempts to position oneself in particular ways. It had also created a lot of spare time. Expressions I heard often during my fieldwork were that "I don't have anything to do" (*ana ma ʿandi shī*), or "I'm free" (*ana fāḍi*). Mornings in language classes would create free afternoons, getting permission to do another course could take months, a trip to the Jobcenter might puncture an otherwise free week. When I returned to visit, however, many of my friends stressed how "busy" (*mashgūl*) they were and bemoaned what was for some a tiring routine of early mornings and long commutes to get to low-paid work or the classes of a vocational education. There were fewer afternoons spent waiting at the Jobcenter, hanging out with friends in the centre of Dresden to pass time, or staying at home watching television series.

The intervening months did not seem to have prompted similar changes for everyone, however. Rami, who I described in Chapter 1 as an aspiring trader conceiving plans to migrate to Canada where "he is allowed to work", was still waiting for his break. He had bought a second-hand laptop and was doing a free course on the Internet which he hoped would help him work after the Jobcenter said they would not pay for him to do a night-time course in website design. He still wanted to start his own business and told me about someone he knew who had set up a website for an Arabic food shop that would deliver food to the door. However, he said, as he often had during my fieldwork, "everything in Germany is complicated". Similarly, Khalid continued to be unemployed and to attend meetings at the Jobcenter. He explained that he had gone from one "black" job to another, mainly in fast-food restaurants, hoping to get an official contract. He wanted to do a vocational education but had not signed up. We met at a restaurant where he had found work and he told me about his satisfaction of not having a plan, but later complained of being bored in Germany.

There were two main observations I took away from the visit which point to the changing terms of displacement in Germany for many of my interlocutors, regardless of what they were occupied doing. The first was that several of my friends had laid carpet in their apartments. The furnishing of homes had been the cause of considerable preoccupation during

my fieldwork but nonetheless remained largely utilitarian and few of the homes had carpet when I left. The laying of carpet and the extent to which this was a pattern for a number of individuals suggests a shift in perspective; a new sense of permanence and settlement perhaps reflecting the fact that everyone had in the intervening year had their visa extended for a further three years. The second observation relates to the new kinds of questions and challenges prompted by entering workplaces, vocational colleges and schools. I noticed that a number of friends talked about how they had hidden their Muslim identity to German peers and bosses or teachers. Akram told me that he had turned down sweets with alcohol in them when they were offered around his class, and when the teacher asked why he wouldn't eat something with alcohol in it, rather than explain he is Muslim and does not consume alcohol, he replied that his doctor had said he was not allowed to. There was a similar account from Mohammed who told me that he would not tell his colleagues about fasting during Ramadan but instead would take time off work and say he was going on holiday. In these cases, and in others, they described their obfuscation when it came to revealing their Muslim identity. In contrast, during my fieldwork, Muslim identity had often been in the background for individuals. It was understood to be an important part of their negative characterisation in German society but second to the stigma of their identities as refugees. In the new sites and settings of everyday life there was a growing shift towards ethnic and cultural distinction, pointing to an issue raised by Pearlman (2018) who wondered to what extent cultural distinctions will become more present and divisive for her Syrian interlocutors over time.

The changing circumstances and concerns of my interlocutors opens up avenues for further research. What the accounts of hiding Muslim identity reveals are the new kinds of negotiation taking place between Germans and Syrians in the sites and settings of everyday life. This presents opportunities to explore the sharing of such spaces in ways that were uncommon during my fieldwork. Scholars have suggested that male migrants seek to "fit in" and perform approximations of local norms of "hegemonic masculinity" (Howson 2002). This did not seem to be the case in my experience, in part because there was limited interaction with locals, with the exception of often elderly German neighbours. To what extent then do increasing encounters prompt new terms, expectations and norms for gendered belonging in Germany? At the same time, this raises questions about the German "hosts". As Charsley and Spencer have argued, "integration" is a two-way process in which "all members of society engage in participation, interaction and change" (2019). To what extent do growing encounters

with Arab refugees, already the case for Germans living in various parts of the city, affect the norms, assumptions and lifestyles of its inhabitants?

An important part of the discourse of my interlocutors was their capacity to be able to contribute to German society, both now and in the future, in particular through becoming gainfully employed and productive men who pay taxes in the future. However, doomsayers about refugees in Germany chart statistics of high levels of long-term unemployment of previous refugees in Germany. To what extent will this be the case for Syrian and Palestinian refugees, as an economist predicted in 2015 (Wößmann 2015), and what are the implications for such men on masculine identity and the terms for negotiating belonging? This question also connects to changes taking place over the life course of men themselves, such as marriage and fatherhood, which are influenced by factors such as employment. Ghannam (2013) has referred to "masculine trajectories" to capture the way that expectations of masculinity change over time. How then do changes over men's lives shape the terms by which they seek to carve out a space for belonging in Germany? In a striking chapter, Naguib (2018) has described the importance of care and providing for children for men migrating to Norway in 2016. To what extent do age and "life events" such as marriage and having children shape the kinds of practices and discourses around masculinity and belonging in Germany? Indeed, in the case of men who manage to arrange family reunification, these changes can happen very suddenly. This also raises the question of how such life events change in Germany, and how in turn this shapes notions of masculinity and maturity, particularly in light of literature that has brought into focus the importance of men's roles as husbands and fathers, and "responsible" masculinity. There was already discussion about the implications of men being unable to afford *mahar* (bridewealth) in Germany, and the expectation that their future wives would need to work, in contrast to the enduring middle class ideal in Syria in which the man is the sole earner and breadwinner after marriage (Norbakk 2018).

If masculinity changes over the life course and creates different expectations for different men, so does the meaning of being a "refugee" (Pearlman 2018). This study has emphasised the stigmatising associations of the refugee label and the attempts of young displaced men to overcome such stigma by asserting masculine identity and belonging as insiders in Germany. To this extent it was often stated by my interlocutors that people ceased to be refugees when they gained financial autonomy, or the right to remain. Yet, as Ludwig (2016) has shown in the case of Liberian refugees in New York, even 15 years after arrival they can continue to be referred to as refugees and this was an enduring source of stigma.

When, if ever, and how, does "refugeeness" manifest for Syrians and Palestinians in the future? I got some insight into the changing terms and experiences of the status of refugees when I re-visited Dresden. Mohammed was one of the few people I knew who was able to find professional work without needing to retrain because of his fluency in English and IT skills. Having found work and therefore evidence of income, as well as the money to be able to travel, he wanted to try and visit his cousin in England who he had not seen since he was a child. He completed the application and paid the money, and then more money, in fact a total of £500. A few weeks later after travelling to Berlin for his interview at the British embassy, he was promptly refused, the Home Office would not allow him to visit because they feared he would try to remain. For Mohammed, this was a slap in the face. He was hundreds of pounds poorer and his sense of owning a "powerful" passport had been shattered: he could not go where Germans with German passports could. This denial of freedom of movement provides an insight into the changing terms of refugeeness and (partial) citizenship. At the same time, refugee identity and status may not only reside in the experience of restrictions and stigma but could in the future be a source of pride. "Refugeeness" for some of Pearlman's Syrian interlocutors was seen as "a lightning rod for political claims", for example (2018). When the dust has settled, will the refugee label be a source of dignity and political conviction for some Syrians (as it is for many Palestinians), even when, or if, they cease to be refugees?

This also raises the question of the future relationship to Syrian or Palestinian identity in diaspora. I have focussed on the adjustments and future stance of refugees seeking to negotiate belonging in Germany. In time, however, this may well shift more towards creating spaces for the expression and reproduction of Syrian and Palestinian identity. Hage has described how "feeling at home" depends on "shared symbolic forms, shared morality, shared values and most importantly perhaps, shared language" (1997, 103). How will such "feeling at home" manifest in the future for Syrians and Palestinians? Will it reproduce the political and sectarian divisions that people have carried with them from the conflict? The creation of diasporic events and associations have been shown to be important sites for the display and fulfilment of a valorised masculinity, in contexts such as cultural associations of the Somali community in Denmark (Kleist 2010), or the church for the Zimbabwean community in the UK (Pasura 2008). These sites can often serve as spaces in which to craft a sense of dignity that is otherwise denied in the context of the host society. What function will these play for Syrian and Palestinian male refugees in the future? To what extent will they manifest changing gender norms, for example, or become the space for "patriarchal restoration", and why?

This extends to the question of transnationalism for the future Syrian and Palestinian diaspora. In Chapter 6 I showed the refusal of political activism among Syrians, in part because of the way in which it was seen to perform refugee identity and outsiderness. A question in the future will be to explore the formation and role of such transnational ties and how they evolve and change. This relates to the avenues for status and belonging in Germany. Scholars have shown how exclusion in host societies generates conditions for the forging of transnational ties where there is the chance to establish status and dignity (Hansen 2008). To what extent will Syria in the future offer a site for such ties and in what terms? One important aspect is the relationships forged online between Syrian and Palestinian men in Germany and Arab women in places like Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Turkey. This was a site that was difficult to learn about and one that I did not at the time recognise as being an important resource for how men assert dignity in the context of Germany. Future research should seek to explore such relationships, but also, more broadly, representation of the experience of displacement online.

For the Syrians and Palestinians I got to know in Dresden, they will no doubt be affected by many of these questions in the future. This thesis offers insight into a brief but critical moment in the trajectories of Syrian and Palestinian male refugees in Germany, a period in which they were accepted as refugees and entered new pathways to integration. What I have shown is the diverse processes and consequences by which young male refugees sought to communicate dignity through negotiating respectable masculinity and making claims to citizenship. What happens next is in process. As time passes there will be new ways to express masculine identity and belonging in Germany and new affronts and challenges.

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